GUARDIAN WEEKLY
October 15 1995

Cycling World Championship

Indurain powers to world title

Barry Andrew in Tunja

MIGUEL INDURAIN once again showed his mastery against the clock to win his first world title in the individual time-trial championship in the Colombian Andes last week. In front at every time check, the 31-year-old Spaniard covered the 43km (27 miles) between Paipa and Tunja in 55min. 30.4sec to take the gold medal by 49 seconds from his compatriot Abraham Olano.

It was an awe-inspiring display by Indurain over a course containing six testing climbs and ridden almost entirely into a headwind. But it was all too much for the lone British entrant Graeme Obree who, struggling for breath, dropped from 14th place at 21km to finish a distant 21st, nearly six minutes down in 1hr. 1min 16.4sec.

In comparison there was a display as sleek as a mountain cat from Indurain, whose five successive wins in the Tour de France have come on the back of his dominance of the time-trials.

At the 21km point he was already 43sec up on Olano and closing in on Maurizio Fondriest, the former road-race champion, who had started two minutes earlier with hopes of a medal. Demoralised as the Indurain Express roared by, the Italian fell away to finish ninth.

Indurain scarcely changed his facial expression and appeared comfortable throughout. The nearest he came to showing human frailty was when Olano, a 25-year-old touted as the natural successor to his fellow Basque, limited his losses to only six more seconds over the second part of the course.

"I started off at a good pace but controlling the rhythm for the more difficult parts," Indurain said, before adding: "You are always close to the limit in a time-trial but you must not go over the limit. The hardest part was near the end."

Germany's Uwe Peschel came in third, more than a minute in arrears of Olano but narrowly up on the Colombian Duban Ramirez, who was cheered all the way by an enormous crowd standing six deep throughout the towns.

Despite his success in stage races, the closest Indurain had come to a world title was in 1993 when he was second in the road race. The time-trial was introduced at the world championships only last year, when it was won by Britain's Chris Boardman, ruled out here because of his horrific crash in the Tour de France prologue.

The women's race was won by the 36-year-old Jeannie Longo of France, who finished more than a minute clear of her closest challenger over a 26km course. Clara Hughes of Canada took silver ahead of Australia's Kathy Watt, while Britain's Yvonne McGregor finished 13th.

In the road race competition on Sunday, the glory again went to Spain but this time Olano took the coveted rainbow jersey while Indurain settled for the silver medal.

Olano, who rode the last kilometre of the gruelling 265.5km race with a punctured rear tyre, finished 35 seconds ahead of Indurain, who beat Italy's Marco Pantani, who won bronze, and Switzerland's Mauro Gianetti in a sprint for second place.

As the race came down to a dozen contenders on the penultimate lap of the 17.7km circuit, Olano slipped away from the leading group. He was 25 seconds clear at the bell and, although the gap was halved on the long climb to the course's highest point, once over the top he descended fluently on roads still wet from a storm.

It was a mature performance from the 25-year-old Basque who finished second overall in last month's Tour of Spain in which he won all three time-trials.

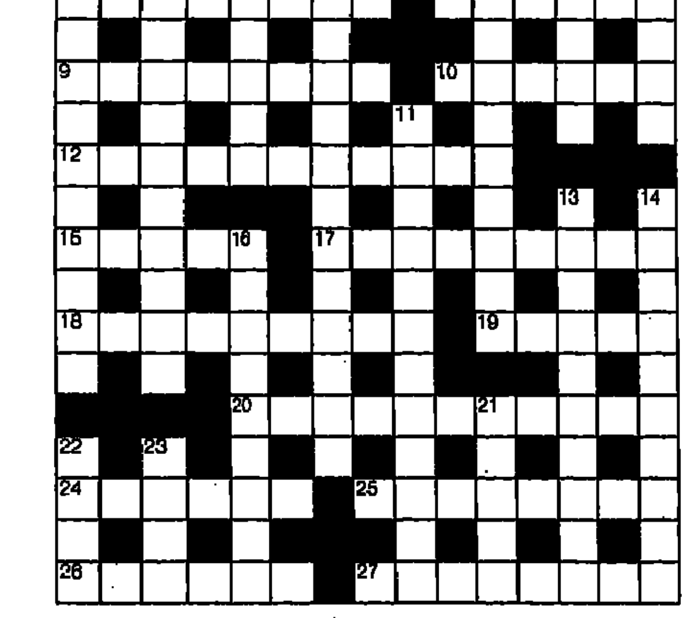
Indurain punctured twice during the 15-lap race, the second time almost crucially at the top of the penultimate climb.

But after a quick bike change he soon regained his place with the leaders before the start of a fascinating chapter of cat-and-mouse which ended when Olano made his decisive attack.

● The most famous ankle in British sport returned to competition on Sunday when Chris Boardman won a 28-mile time-trial in Cheshire's Delamere Forest just down the road from his home in the Wirral, *writes William Fotheringham.*

"I'm very pleased. It was nice to start in a friendly local race," he said later. Friendly and low-key it may have been but they were the first turns of the pedals on the road to Atlanta next year.

Cryptic crossword by Araucaria



Across

1 Pictorial pun about outsize hearts producing flowers (4-4)
5 Ring in flower requiring tenant (2,4)
9 A form of distaste (8)
10 Pole after cut flower (6)
12 God assigned artist to flower (11)
15 Flower on trial would be working (5)
17 Turn out, chaps that enter it for food (9)
18 One poor soul must get happy before a flower (9)
19 Church official with flowers (5)
20 Flower girl is having a drink with a relation (11)
24 Model earldom of yore entertaining kings? (6)
25 If 550's back in message it will spread (8)
26 Birds eat missing flower in East Anglia (6)
27 A flower in East Anglia's covering doctor with flowers (8)

Down

1 I may cross a flower: dig a border for me (4,6)
2 Lady Arkwright's outside with a flower (10)
3 Broom producing some blossom initially (5)
4 Spooner's argosies miscarried? It tells me what I want (8,4)
6 Worker in force (9)
7 Garden flower (4)
8 Flower pretty nearly at centre (4)
11 Dried flower painter, we hear, much worse than a liar? (12)
13 Study choice — of the same candidate as before? (10)
14 Resolution affects United Nations with distress (10)
16 Kirk involved with Mass deserted shortly: sign they moved too fast? (4,5)
21 Flower for editor and all around him (5)
22 King of primates takes me away from Eastern flower (4)
23 Flower for singular nosegay (4)

Last week's solution

PSALMIST TRAGIC
A T I T O A R
CORONARY COARSE
K I N A F S D O
ELUDE DOUBTLESS
T M S I L N O
CONVALESCENT
H I T A S C R E
INSTAURATION
N A I R R N K
DEBENTURE ERASE
M E O S N C T R
OBLATE AGRARIAN
S L C T R V E
TRASHY SHADWELL

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

United's cup of woe

THE SECOND leg in the second round of the Coca-Cola Cup provided major surprises for Premiership teams, four of whom were put out by lesser lights from lower divisions.

Manchester United completed a dismal week by first crashing out of the Uefa Cup and then, in mid-week, in the home competition, losing to York 4-3 on aggregate. United had gone to York in the hope of reversing a 3-0 first-leg humiliation by the Second Division strugglers and, with all their big guns blazing, they were full of confidence. Although they did score the three goals needed to wipe out the deficit, a goal scored by York's Scott Jordan clinched it for the home side.

The only bright spot for United was the announcement by the chairman, Martin Edwards, that the club had made a pre-tax profit of £20 million for the year to July — an increase of 86 per cent on the previous year — mainly through a surge in replica kit and other merchandise which took the total takings at the club to almost £61 million.

Chelsea were another Premiership club whose Coca-Cola lost its fizz. They were beaten 1-0 by Stoke of the First Division. Nottingham Forest, managed a 2-2 draw against Second Division Bradford but lost 4-5 on aggregate. Third Division Bury beat Sheffield United 4-2 in the second leg and 5-4 on aggregate. Everton lost 4-2 to First Division Millwall and Charlton defeated Wimbledon 8-7 on aggregate.

There were easy wins for Arsenal, Aston Villa, Blackburn, Liverpool, Manchester City, Newcastle, Sheffield Wednesday, Tottenham Hòtspur and West Ham, while Bolton, Leeds and Middlesbrough also advanced to the next round.

IN the biggest deal yet involving a Brazilian club, Middlesbrough signed São Paulo's attacking midfielder Osvaldo Giroldo Junior, popularly known as Juninho, for £4.75 million.

DAVID BYAS has succeeded Martyn Moxon as Yorkshire's cricket captain. The 32-year-old batsman made his county debut in 1986 and recently completed his most successful season. He got the nod ahead of Michael Bevan, who has been named vice-captain.

Golden girl: Lilia Podkopayeva

LILIA PODKOPAYEVA of Ukraine is the new woman world gymnastics champion. The 17-year-old's victory came as a huge surprise to herself: "I thought maybe I could get a medal, but not the gold," she said. The men's title at the World Gymnastics Championships at Sabae in Japan went to Li Xiaoshuang of China.

ANDERS FORSBRAND gave Sweden its fifth victory of the season when he held off Bernhard Langer of Germany and England's Russell Claydon to take the German Masters in Berlin on Sunday. Forsbrand, whose winning cheque was for £108,330, shot a final round 69 for a 24-under-par total of 264 to beat Langer by two shots. Claydon finished third.

LENNOX LEWIS, the former heavyweight champion of the world, disposed of American Tommy Morrison in six rounds at Atlantic City. He put the American down four times.

In Belfast, Eamonn Loughran successfully defended his WBO welterweight title against Angel Beltre of the Dominican Republic. Their previous encounter had been controversially declared no contest after a clash of heads. The points victory was his fifth defence of the title.

Football results

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE: First Division: Barnsley 2, Leicester 2; Birmingham 2, Southend 0; Charlton 0, Grimsby 1; Crystal Palace 0, Sunderland 1; Huddersfield Town 0, Port Vale 2; Ipswich 1, Wolverhampton 2. Oldham 1, Portsmouth 1; Sheffield Utd 0, Derby 2; Stoke 1, Norwich 1; Tranmere 1, Luton 0; Watford 0, Millwall 1; West Brom 2, Reading 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Leicester (played 11, points 21); 2, Millwall (11-21); 3, Sunderland (11-19).

Second Division: Brentford 1, Blackpool 2; Bristol Rovers 0, Bournemouth 2; Burnley 1, Wycombe 1; Carlisle 0, Notts C 0; Chesterfield 1, Crewe 2; Hull 2, Shrewsbury 3; Oxford Utd 2, Stockport 1; Rotherham 1, Brighton 0; Swansea 2, Bradford City 0; Swindon 2, Bristol City 0; Walsall 1, Peterborough 1; York 1, Wrexham 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Swindon (11-26); 2, Blackpool (11-22); 3, Crewe (10-21).

Third Division: Barnet 3, Exeter 2; Bury 2, L Orient 1; Cambridge Utd 4, Cardiff 2; Chester 0, Doncaster 3; Colchester 4, Hartlepool 1; Gillingham 1, Rochdale 0; Hereford 2, Torquay 1; Lincoln 0, Darlington 2; Plymouth 3, Fulham 0; Preston 3, Scarborough 2; Scunthorpe 0, Northampton 0; Wigan 2, Mansfield Town 6. **Leading positions:** 1, Gillingham (11-24); 2, Chester (11-20); 3, Cambridge Utd (11-19).

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Aberdeen 0, Rangers 1; Celtic 2, Partick 1; Hibernian 2, Falkirk 1; Kilmarnock 3, Hearts 1; Motherwell 0, Raith Rovers 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Rangers (7-19); 2, Celtic (7-16); 3, Aberdeen (7-13).

First Division: Clydebank 1, Greenock Morton 0; Dumbarton 1, Dundee Utd 0; Dundee 3, St Mirren 1; Hamilton 1, Dunfermline 3; St Johnstone 1, Airdrie 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Dunfermline (8-21); 2, Dundee (8-13); 3, Dundee Utd (8-13).

Second Division: Berwick Rangers 0, East Fife 1; Clyde 1, Stranraer 1; Forfar 0, Stirling Albion 6; Queen of South 0, Ayr 0; Stenhousemuir 3, Montrose 1. **Leading positions:** 1, East Fife (8-21); 2, Berwick (8-16); 3, Stranraer (8-13).

Third Division: Brechin 0, Albion Rovers 1; Cowdenbeath 1, Arbroath 1; East Stirling 0, Caledonian Thistle 6; Queen's Park 0, Alloa 0; Ross County 1, Livingston 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Livingston (8-22); 2, Brechin (8-16); 3, Ross County (8-15).

© Guardian Publications Ltd., 1995. Published by Guardian Publications Ltd., 164 Deansgate, Manchester, M60 2RR, and printed by WCP Commercial Printing, Leek.
Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and mailing offices. Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.

The Guardian Weekly

Vol 153, No 17
Week ending October 22, 1995

The Washington Post Le Monde

Black marchers affirm new dream

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

FOR a day the city was theirs. From every corner of the United States they came, carpeting the National Mall from the Washington monument to the steps of the Capitol.

The Million Man March on Monday was the largest display of black strength since 1963, when Martin Luther King told a vast crowd on the same spot that he had a dream.

While the organisers claimed a turnout of more than one million black men, official estimates put attendance at 400,000.

Billed as a day of atonement, the rally had a mood of celebration. Some saw it as sending a message to white America. "They call us the invisible men," the classical singer Daniel Comegys said. "I came to be counted, to make sure people realise we exist."

Most said the march was to boost bruised self-esteem. One banner read: "Black Man, Love Yourself."

With 68 per cent of black households headed by single mothers, and one in three black men under 30 either in jail or on probation, everyone agreed there was plenty to atone for.

Black men had come to the steps of the Republican Congress to stem a rightward drift that has hit them hardest, from the rollback of affirmative action, to the attack on welfare.

But the rally also marked the coronation of its convenor, Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam, as the leader of black America. Despite his race-baiting of whites and Jews — which led several moderate black groups to boycott the event — many heeded his call.

Surrounded by his bodyguard and behind bullet-proof glass, Mr Farrakhan delivered a hotly divisive keynote speech, lasting more than two hours. "There are still two Americas, black and white, separate and unequal," he said.

As Rev Jesse Jackson, the poet Maya Angelou, singer Stevie Wonder and others stood by, Mr Farrakhan lashed out at critics, saying: "I'm not filled with malice. I come in the tradition of the doctor who has to point out what's wrong."

He struck a conciliatory note, calling for a dialogue with Jewish leaders. "I don't like this squabble with the Jewish community. Maybe it is time to sit down and talk ... You hurt. We hurt, too ... Ending the pain may be good for both and ultimately good for the nation."

President Bill Clinton, speaking in Austin, Texas, honoured the black marchers gathering in Washington, but not Mr Farrakhan. His path led to bitterness and division, Mr Clinton argued, while Dr King's legacy still pointed the way to reconciliation.

"One million men are right to be standing up for personal responsibility. But one million men do not make right one man's message of malice and division," Mr Clinton said.

"Whether we like it or not, we are one nation, indivisible. Divorce or separation are not options," he insisted, in a presidential address which rose above conventional political partisanship.

"White America must acknowledge the roots of black pain. To our black citizens, we say, 'Your house too must be cleansed of racism'. There are too many today, white and black, on left and right, on street corners and on the radio waves, who seek to sow division for their own purposes. No more. We must be one."



Reflected glory . . . One of the demonstrators on the Million Man March in Washington PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW INNERARITY

That was not the message from the Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, who had called on blacks to give no support to the Nation of Islam, which he accused of trying "to move the entire black community into a paranoid mindset that is irrational and false, and should be be repudiated by responsible leaders".

In an America where racial debate is polarising sharply between Republicans' condemnation of a black pathology, and the Nation of Islam's demand for a separate black state, Mr Clinton's message of unity was unashamedly old-fashioned.

Comment, page 12
Washington Post, page 16

Britain tells France to delay tests

Ian Black

BRITAIN has told France it cannot maintain its supportive silence over nuclear tests if another blast is triggered before next month's Commonwealth summit in New Zealand.

Urging France to delay the next test is part of Britain's effort to persuade Commonwealth countries not to "put it in the dock" at the Auckland conference.

Another part of the strategy is to announce backing for a South Pacific nuclear-free zone.

The Foreign Office denied making a direct request to Paris to delay its next test but a spokesman said: "We are sure that the French are well aware of the date of the Commonwealth summit." No decision had yet been taken on the nuclear-free zone.

According to well-placed diplomatic sources, Britain has stressed to France the political dangers of testing again at the time of the conference, where John Major will face hostility from New Zealand and Australia, as well as smaller Commonwealth countries.

The next test could be scheduled for early November if France maintains its usual four-week pattern. The Auckland summit runs from November 10 to 13.

Commonwealth diplomats believe France will respect the British position. "It makes perfect sense," said one diplomat. "You can imagine what it will be like if the French explode a bomb three days before the Auckland summit. But the British are being very secretive about all this. They are very nervous and with good reason."

Trevor McDonald becomes voice of nation

Edward Pilkington

HE STARTED out as a teenager in Trinidad who taught himself to speak perfect English by reading the Oxford dictionary and emulating the mellifluous cadences of the BBC. His transformation is now complete.

As a boy, Trevor McDonald learnt new words daily and modelled his elocution on the tones of the late radio cricket commentator John Arlott. He went on to become Trevor McDonald, OBE, television newsreader and benchmark of impeccable speech.

The final accolade came as Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, sought to rouse last week's Tory party conference in Blackpool with a promise to set new standards for spoken language across Britain. She told delegates that Mr McDonald would head a body of "energetic people" who will promote the use of "better English".

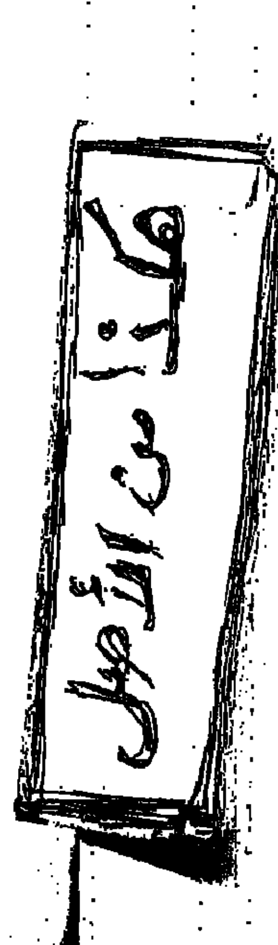
The group, which will include Sir David English, chairman of Associated Newspapers, and the Tory MP Gyles Brandreth, would aim to empower people "to express themselves clearly and appropriately".

"He lived with a dictionary," said Lionel Dixon, news editor for Radio Trinidad in Port of Spain where Mr McDonald worked in the early 1960s. "From day one he prided himself on speaking correctly. His commentaries on cricket and horse-racing were so meticulously worded listeners used to write in for the transcripts."

His father, an engineer in an oil refinery, advocated Victorian moral values; his mother gave him elocution lessons. "We had to learn new words every day and use them," he said recently.

Tongue tied, page 12

Austria	AS30	Malta	45c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.40
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 9.50	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Spain	P 275
Germany	DM 3.60	Sweden	SK 17
Greece	DR 400	Switzerland	SF 3.30
Italy	L 3,000	Thailand	60 Baht



Cost of living explains Japan's low birth rate

KEVIN RAFFERTY'S articles from Japan are usually good, but this time (Japan swallows the Pill, October 8) he has got himself in a real mess. First, the Pill is already available on prescription in Japan: the problem is that women have to go back every month to the doctor for a re-examination and new prescription, a process that discourages many from getting it.

Second, the real issues which are keeping the birth rate low are the high cost of housing (which mean that most families in urban areas, where the majority of Japanese live, can only afford one or two children), and of education. Most families simply cannot afford the larger houses and expenses required to raise three or more children. The larger number of abortions are had by married women in their late 20s and 30s who have become pregnant again but feel they cannot, for economic reasons, raise any more children. Such pregnancies are often due to the failures of contraception methods, while the decline in the number of abortions can be quite directly attributed to the increasing efficiency of contraception methods, not a decline in sexual activity.

As for the population declining to 46,000 by the 22nd century, where on earth does this statistic come from? In 1991 there were 300,000 more births than deaths, and the birth rate, although declining, will remain ahead of the death rate, according to projections by Japan's ministry of health and welfare, for some time yet.

Attempts to promote the birth rate (to have more babies for the sake of the country) have been a recurrent theme in nationalist discourse over the past century or more, and nationalists have often resorted to scare stories such as this that have no basis in fact. Kevin Rafferty, as a reporter based in Japan, ought to be aware of such issues, and should not let himself be taken in by silly stories.

As for the average Japanese male losing interest in sex, and the hope that the Pill will increase births, both are amusing notions, but the former is simply (at least in the light of the increasing focus on sex and prurience in the Japanese media) not credible, while the latter is merely illogical.

Ian Reader,
Nordic Institute of Asian Studies,
Copenhagen, Denmark

Study backs Bannister

IN 1936 I was a student in the Witwatersrand Medical School, Johannesburg. One of my teachers was Dr Lawrence H Wells, later Professor of Anatomy, University of Cape Town. He made a meticulous anatomical study of the foot of the Bantu (African). Among other observations he found the African to have a longer and more robust calcaneus (heel bone) than white caucasians. In some other aspects the foot of the African was more efficient than that of the caucasian.

At about that time, and later, Dr Ernst Jokl studied the cardiovascular efficiency of Bantu compared with white children. The Africans, in general, ran faster, and farther, and their heart rates were slower when exercised than in white children. They were in better physical shape than the whites even if they were not as well nourished.

Perhaps Africans really do have more efficient feet and cardiovascular systems than whites. Obviously training and good nutrition would contribute to success.

It would be nice if your correspondents on this subject (October 1) were to collect actual anatomical and physiological data before they pontificate and damn Sir Roger Bannister (September 24) for his perfectly reasonable views.

W Harding le Riche,
University of Toronto,
Ontario, Canada

SIR ROGER BANNISTER gives a rather simplistic explanation for the dominance of black athletes in international events. He attributes this dominance to anatomical or physiological superiority. I, however, believe that maximum fitness is probably not innate nor is it achieved by rigorous training under expert coaches, but rather through a variety of activities practised over a long period of time.

For example, in Vanuata, most families do not have fridges, electricity, gas, televisions, cars or sometimes even running water. There are few shops and there is not enough money for families to buy all their food from them. Therefore, from an early age, children are involved in the daily tasks of collecting firewood and water, clearing and fending gardens, fishing, raising animals, preparing food and washing clothes. Their diet is mainly vegetarian and they walk long distances in all kinds of weather. In their spare time they play mainly soccer or volleyball. In general, people here are slim, fit and hardy.

If black athletes from small, poor countries are dominant in athletics, this could be because they are involved in a range of physical activities, their diet is better and they are not pampered by the comforts enjoyed by modern western societies.

Norah Taylor,
Luganville, Santo, Vanuatu

Chirac jettisons French ideals

AS Jean-Marie Colombani pointed out (Le Monde, September 17) Mr Chirac's deterrence argument is "... at odds with the tide of people's dreams of disarmament".

Many countries have long since abandoned the concept of building up an arsenal for security, on the basis that we would all be safest if no one possessed nuclear weapons.

The argument which Mr Chirac has reputedly used to justify continued testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific is French sovereignty over its Polynesian territories. That argument of territorial sovereignty too is at odds with a broader concept.

It ignores the lessons of events such as the Chernobyl disaster, which ought to have taught us that certain catastrophes cannot be neatly contained within territorial borders.

Mr Chirac represents people who are citizens of France — a nation founded on the ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity. It is difficult to understand why France refuses to apply those principles in its international relations.

As for New Zealand's position, the suggestion that our protest against the tests is motivated by a wish to destabilise French Polynesia politically is incorrect. Far from being sinister, our protest is just the expression of our collective disapproval and concern for this part of the world.

We are quite simply a small, peaceful, democratic and profoundly anti-nuclear country. We care about this planet.

A L Pinnock,
Auckland, New Zealand

Greenpeace not Quaker inspired

GREENPEACE has many faults and virtues, but it has no "idealist Quaker principles" (Le Monde, October 8). Until three years ago I was a senior manager with Greenpeace International in Amsterdam. Previously, I had worked for 11 years with two Quaker organisations. At Greenpeace I lamented the absence of Quaker beliefs and practices. To illustrate:

Greenpeace uses non-violent tactics, but in spite of its name, spurns a pacifist position. It acts exclusively on environmental issues.

Quakers hold a dear belief in the fellowship of humanity: the driving moral force behind Greenpeace is a commitment to save the planet. Thus, it purposefully eschews social issues, so central to Quaker practice.

Quakers bear witness to their faith in the universality and sanctity of every human through a commitment to gender, racial and cultural equality. Greenpeace does have some women in key positions, but in spite of its global outreach, by and large it is a white, male establishment permeated with Anglo-Saxon culture.

The hallowed Quaker belief in consensual decision-making is antithetical to the activism behind Greenpeace's spectacular successes . . . and failures.

Ricardo Wilson-Grau,
Amstelveen, The Netherlands

Racism and the Internet

PART of what made "Pure, white and deadly" (September 24) so interesting was that Roger Eatwell, with just a bit of paragraph shuffling and an added sentence, answered his own question (How can democracies respond to racism on the Internet without, one assumes, resorting to censorship?) as follows: "There are plenty of young white males who feel desperately alienated by swift social change and poor jobs that are the only working-class male employment opportunities in post-industrial society."

One would add only: these people need jobs and an income. One might also add as an afterthought: whenever there is economic uncertainty, instability and recession, minorities, children and women suffer more physical abuse. More blacks were (are?) lynched in the southern United States, as J K Gailbrath noted, during times of economic duress. Nazism began its work on the gypsies and Jews in the thirties. There is no use in cooling the thermometer of a fever victim; nor is there any use in censoring the Internet to reduce racism.

Chris Ford,
Shimizu-cho, Ashiya-shi, Japan

Briefly

YOU ARE wrong to criticise the O J Simpson jury for placing racism above the killings they were called to address (American justice left in tatters, October 15). The completely racist nature of the LAPD means that no black person can ever receive a fair trial. This, in itself, means that they are entitled to an acquittal, as no conviction can ever be deemed totally "safe". For every O J who goes free, how many black people are falsely convicted as a direct result of racist police, judges and juries? The release of any black defendant, regardless of their social or economic status, is a victory for the black community (hence the scenes of jubilation across black America) and a defeat for racists such as Mark Fuhrman. If it isn't legit you must acquit.

Ian Johnston,
London

I WAS perplexed at Michael Hofmann's pointless review of Donald Prater's biography of Thomas Mann (October 1). His approach to his subject seems to suffer from an affliction best described by the Persian saying, "Don't confuse the moon with the finger pointing at the moon".

He sees Mann as the collection of lit-crit stereotypes he must have read somewhere (including, significantly, the reductive and simplistic "repressed homosexual" theme) and then judges another's biography based on them!

It's the likes of Hofmann who would turn any prospective reader back to the tube rather than inspiring one to spend some time trying to learn something about, and by, a patently great author whose work and life chronicle a significant chunk of 20th century history.

Trevor Coates,
New York, USA

JOHN ALLEY criticises Mrs Thatcher for limply ceding Hong Kong to the Chinese. I suspect the lady was a realist, because the colony is dependent on China for its water. If required, Beijing could reduce Hong Kong to chaos in less than a week by turning off the taps.

John Wightman,
Tauranga, New Zealand

IN PROTEST at the disgraceful nuclear tests by France in the Pacific, I have decided to disown my French heritage. Attempting to translate my name to something non-Gallic, I almost came up with the perfect anagram — "Evil Chirac" — but was missing one "i". "Evil craché" was pretty good but like the Pacific nations, I couldn't get rid of the French. I welcome any solutions from Guardian crossword aficionados and compilers. Otherwise Horseman (of the Apocalypse) will have to do.

C Chevalier,
Solomon Islands

The Guardian Weekly
October 22, 1995 Vol 153 No 17

Annual subscription rates are £47 (United Kingdom); £52 (Europe inc. Eire); £55 USA and Canada; £60 Rest of World.
Letters to the Editor and other editorial correspondence to: The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. Fax: 44-171-242-0985 (UK: 0171-242 0985). e-mail: weekly@guardian.co.uk.

Saddam the only choice for Iraqis

Jonathan Rugman in Baghdad

DO YOU WANT Saddam Hussein as Iraq's president or not? was the question asked of 8 million Iraqis on Sunday. With only one candidate — President Saddam — the result was a foregone conclusion, and yet another monument to the Iraqi leader's ego.

Sure enough, in the first referendum since he came to power, unelected, in 1979, President Saddam won a landslide 99.96 per cent of votes cast, fuelling fiery street celebrations in Iraqi cities.

It is true that despite everything, many Iraqis still support President Saddam. They either seem to have been cowed by 27 years of Ba'athist terror, or they swallow the intensive propaganda that says he is their saviour, Iraq's only imaginable leader.

The first voter I saw — an old man in a rundown Baghdad suburb known as Saddam City — never even put pen to ballot paper. An election official bundled him into a polling booth and ticked the "yes" box on his behalf. "Saddam Hussein is our brother and our son," the perfectly happy voter, Latif Hassan Ali, explained afterwards. "He is a pure Iraqi and not a foreigner."

Mr Ali then disappeared into the chaotic crowd, which overran the polling station.

One Iraqi did tell us in hushed tones that he would vote against the president, because five years of United Nations sanctions meant he could not afford food. But otherwise it was hard to find anyone who would openly criticise the regime.

The president himself was nowhere to be seen. His other daughters, Ragha and Rana, could not vote, as they defected to Jordan two months ago. His elder son Uday kept a low profile, after rumours that his father burned down a garage housing his beloved collection of luxury cars, in punishment for the young man's gangsterish behaviour.

Washington Post, page 15



Women queue to vote in Iraq's first referendum PHOTO: ENRIC F MARTI

Ban on landmines eludes UN forum

David Fairhall

A UNITED NATIONS conference dedicated to controlling "inhumane" weapons has ended in a failure to agree tighter controls over landmines, which kill 20,000 civilians a year, many of them children.

There was agreement by the conference on a limited ban on lasers designed to blind people. But this applies only to weapons — such as already marketed by China — specifically intended to blind individuals on the battlefield.

The laser ban was supported by 35 countries, including Britain and the United States, attending the conference in Vienna to revise the 1980 Inhumane Weapons Convention.

But the Pentagon has actually gone farther than the new protocol requires by cancelling initial production of an advanced laser countermeasure system (LCMS) designed to knock out military optical equipment, in the course of which soldiers could also be blinded. Ironically, the cancellation was ordered as American diplomats in Vienna were pushing the conference to agree a legal loophole which might have allowed such developments to go ahead under the laser protocol.

The failure to agree tighter control of anti-personnel mines after three weeks of negotiation was condemned as "shameful" by pressure groups lobbying the conference, many of whom have been calling for a complete ban on the production, use and export of such weapons.

The International Save the Children Alliance (ISCA) and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines immediately announced plans for a blacklist of companies which manufacture mines or their components, many of them big industrial names in the US and Europe, to encourage a consumer boycott.

Britain does not manufacture landmines — though its armed forces have several types in stock — and has unilaterally banned the export of anti-personnel mines which are not self-destructing or self-neutralising. But the UK government has rejected calls for a total ban. Nevertheless, the British delegation pressed for controls on the use of mines in internal as well as international conflicts.

● The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, said on Monday that the concept of asylum for refugees was under threat as governments around the world closed their borders to the victims of conflict.

"Many countries are openly admitting their weariness with large numbers of refugees and blatantly closing borders. Others are more insidiously introducing laws and procedures which effectively deny admission to their territory," she said.

Mrs Ogata said events in Africa's Great Lakes region had "demonstrated that even the proverbial African generosity towards refugees has become strained. — *Reuter*

Desperate Serbs crowd infamous camp

Julian Borger sees the notorious Omarska complex host new inmates as the tide turns in the Bosnian war

IT IS NOT the first time hungry and frightened faces have stared out from the wire fence around Omarska's disused iron mine. Nor is it the first time Serbian soldiers have come to beat the men and lead them away.

Omarska has seen all this before. It was the most notorious of a string of concentration camps for Muslim and Croatian men in 1992. This time the victims are Serbs.

They are refugees fleeing from the front as the politics of ethnic cleansing comes full circle and the great Serbian project of an ethnically pure state collapses in ruins.

In Omarska alone there are more than 10,000 refugees. They huddle between the conveyor belts and the huge brick-red loading bays — old Serbian men, women and children uprooted and consigned to a life of poverty.

Many of the refugees shake empty plastic containers and ask hopefully for diesel fuel, well aware it may be the only ticket out of Omarska.

The muffled thump of artillery is audible. The ceasefire is five days old, but the Bosnian and Croatian armies still covet the town of Prijedor, 10 miles to the west. The impact of their shells is a constant reminder to the refugees that they may still not be safe. They want to get away, but most have run out of fuel.

Omarska may have found new victims, but the people in charge are still the same. The Bosnian Serb leaders who unleashed the war of ethnic purification are only 30 miles down the road in Banja Luka, the country's second biggest town, where they have been meeting to decide whom to blame for the débâcle.

On Monday a brace of generals were retired and Dusan Kozic, the powerless prime minister, resigned. The real leaders — Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic — vowed to regain Serbian lands.

This is the latest blood vow in a war fought in the name of the Serbian nation. But no Serbian politician has visited the 40,000 refugees put to flight by the Bosnian and Croatian armies' latest push. Their only visitors have been the Arkanovci, a militia led by a suspected war criminal, Zeljko "Arkan" Raznatovic who, over the weekend, came and press-ganged men for the front.

"They took everyone, old men, sick men. They took my husband and my three sons. One of them had been wounded twice," said Jovanka, a 50-year-old Serbian farmer from a village near Sanski Most.

Aid workers say the Arkanovci have made several sweeps through the camps. They beat some of their victims and shaved their heads before taking them away.

Some of the Serbian refugees say they were robbed by the Arkanovci as they fled. The Arkanovci have proved themselves to be far more efficient looters than fighters. It is a fact reflected in their bulging waistlines and expensive four-wheel drive vehicles parked outside the Hotel Bosna in Banja Luka.

Arkan has taken part in the Bosnian Serb assembly, possibly as a representative of the Serbian president, Slobodan Milosevic. His men stand guard on every floor of the hotel, feet apart, cradling their rifles. In the evening, they stuff their red berets under their epaulettes and sit down to mixed grill and chips in the dimly-lit dining room.

The Serbian leadership glides to and from the assembly sessions in Mercedes. A handful of refugees stands nearby, watching. At the door of the hotel, a group of supplicants waits for any politician with a familiar face, hoping he might be flattered or bribed into finding their families a shelter. One young woman wears a low-cut shirt and high heels. The Arkanovci stop her at the door, but she lingers on despite the chill of the autumn morning, watching her leaders file out.

● International peace mediators, hopeful that Bosnia's ceasefire will continue to take hold, were meeting in Moscow this week to pave the way for peace negotiations at the end of the month, *writes Angus MacSwan of Reuter in Sarajevo.*

The United Nations said on Monday that the five-day-old truce was largely holding and artillery duels and combat in the northwest between Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian government forces seemed little threat to peace talks.

Berlusconi in the dock

THE cards on the table of Italian politics were abruptly reshuffled at the weekend when a judge in Milan committed the former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi for trial on corruption charges, *writes John Glover in Milan.*

The proceedings are scheduled for January 17, but defence lawyers have appealed to the supreme court to move the trial from Milan to the neighbouring city of Brescia. A ruling is expected on November 9.

Mr Berlusconi was expected to be the right's candidate for prime minister at the next general election. If the poll is called for next March, as many observers think likely, the campaign will open just as the court case gets under way, with a prospective prime minister sitting in the dock.

Members of Mr Berlusconi's Freedom Alliance immediately expressed their support for him. "Nothing has changed. Berlusconi is the leader of the coalition by the will of the electorate," said Pierferdinando Casini, secretary of the allied CCD.

Ten other people were sent for trial, including Mr Berlusconi's brother Paolo, executives of the companies involved, and tax officials. The charges concern bribes amounting to 380 million lire (£150,000) paid to tax officials between 1989 and 1994. The payments were allegedly made to soften inspections carried out of companies belonging to Mr Berlusconi's Fininvest group.

Abacha faces EU sanctions

ECONOMIC and political sanctions against Nigeria are being considered by the European Commission and EU governments because of the military dictatorship's continuing violation of human rights, *writes John Palmer in Brussels.*

Among the measures under discussion are restrictions on visas for members of the junta, freezing their bank accounts in Europe, and a complete ban on all arms sales to Nigeria. Suspension from privileged access to EU trade and aid is also an option.

The prospect of a tougher line against the General Sani Abacha's government follows a near-unanimous decision by the European Parliament to call for the suspension of Nigeria from the Lome Convention, which links more than 70 African, Caribbean and Pacific states to the European Union. Many MEPs also want Nigeria's invitation to next month's Commonwealth heads of government meeting in New Zealand withdrawn.

Gen Abacha's announcement this month that democracy would not be restored for another three years has been the main factor triggering demands for sanctions.

MEPs who have visited Nigeria recently fear that the regime is interpreting the inaction of Britain and other EU governments in the face of massive human rights violations as implicitly condoning their policies.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
October 22 1995

The Week

IRAQ has misled the UN about its missile, chemical and biological weapons and must fully disclose details of these programmes to get sanctions lifted, say UN weapons inspectors.
Washington Post, page 15

HURRICANE Roxanne has killed at least nine people and driven tens of thousands from their homes in southern Mexico. It is the tenth hurricane this season, the worst since 1933.

DOZENS of Pakistani army officers have been arrested on suspicion of plotting to overthrow the prime minister, Benazir Bhutto.

TWO American scientists, Frederick Reines of the University of California at Irvine and Martin L Perl of Stanford University, have been awarded the Nobel prize for physics.

FOUR Neo-Nazis were jailed for between 10 and 15 years in Düsseldorf for the murder of three Turkish children and two women in a fire-bombing attack in Solingen two years ago.

THE Turkish prime minister, Tansu Ciller, has called a general election on December 24, the earliest possible date, after losing a parliamentary vote of confidence on Sunday.

THE HIJACKER of a bus carrying South Korean tourists died when Russian security forces stormed the vehicle in Moscow and freed the remaining four hostages unharmed.

THE Zimbabwean opposition leader, the Rev Ndabaningi Sithole, was remanded in custody on charges of plotting to murder President Robert Mugabe.

A 19-YEAR-OLD Filipino boxer, Restituto Espineli, died of a brain haemorrhage from injuries he received in the ring in Manila.
Scottish boxer dies, page 32

AN EXPLOSION on a Metro train wounded 26 people in Paris. The Interior Ministry said it was caused by a bomb.

MEXICO'S main opposition party, the PAN, won the election for mayor in the capital of the southern state of Chiapas, in a fresh blow to the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party.

WINNIE Mandela, estranged wife of South Africa's President Nelson Mandela, plans to fight his court bid for divorce saying the couple had a reasonable chance of reconciliation.

JEANNE CALMENT, of Arles, France, has become the longest-living person. She is 120 years and 238 days old.

Beleaguered Juppé lacks Disneyland magic

Alex Duval Smith in Marne-La-Vallée and Paul Webster in Paris

THE skyline of Disneyland-Paris loomed mockingly over 20,000 gloomy Gaullists as they gathered for reinvigoration on Monday in front of Alain Juppé — the most unpopular French prime minister since opinion polls began.

In a giant marquee, just yards from the world of Disney jollity, the best Mr Juppé could do in his 50-minute speech to the RPR Gaullist party congress was implore the faithful to trust in the "virtue of hope". His quote from Charles Peguy, his favourite poet — "all we do, we do for our children" — just acted as a reminder that Disney does it better.

Earlier Mr Juppé was elected president of the party, a post widely seen as a pre-emptive consolation prize should he lose his job next time the franc crashes, as it did last week.

His probable successor, Philippe Séguin, was by his side, in body at least. The president of the national assembly made the most eloquent speech of the day, praising President Chirac's "vision" and making three kind references to Mr Juppé.

No one doubts that Mr Séguin, a one-time Maastricht sceptic who breakfasts with Mr Chirac every Wednesday, is the man of the future.

"He is the ideological force of the RPR," said Frédéric Lambert, a law student from Vendée in western France. His student friend Franck Giovannucci was one of hundreds wearing Séguin T-shirts. "He will be prime minister soon — or even better, president."

Was that because Mr Juppé was already yesterday's man, after only five months as prime minister? There would be good cause for that view, since Mr Juppé's "discontent" rating equals Mr Chirac's, at 46 per cent.

Since being chosen by Mr Chirac to head a weak government, Mr Juppé has raised VAT and other taxes, and frozen public sector pay — prompting a near-general strike last week. It has also been revealed that while Mr Juppé was assistant mayor of Paris, he housed his family and himself at low rents in luxury council flats, though he has escaped prosecution over the scandal.

But the party faithful in Marne-La-Vallée on Monday could not bring themselves to condemn Mr Juppé. Gerard Vincent, a businessman from Lyon, aged 50, said: "If the judiciary had taken action against him over the flats, we would have seen the entire ruling class — left or rightwing — thrown on the streets. Who cares if he lives in a nice place? He deserves it."

By the end of the one-day meeting the faithful had received a cascade of rhetoric. In May they danced in the streets, buoyed by their victory. On Monday, some of them left wondering how much more invigorated they might have felt if they had spent the day at Disneyland.

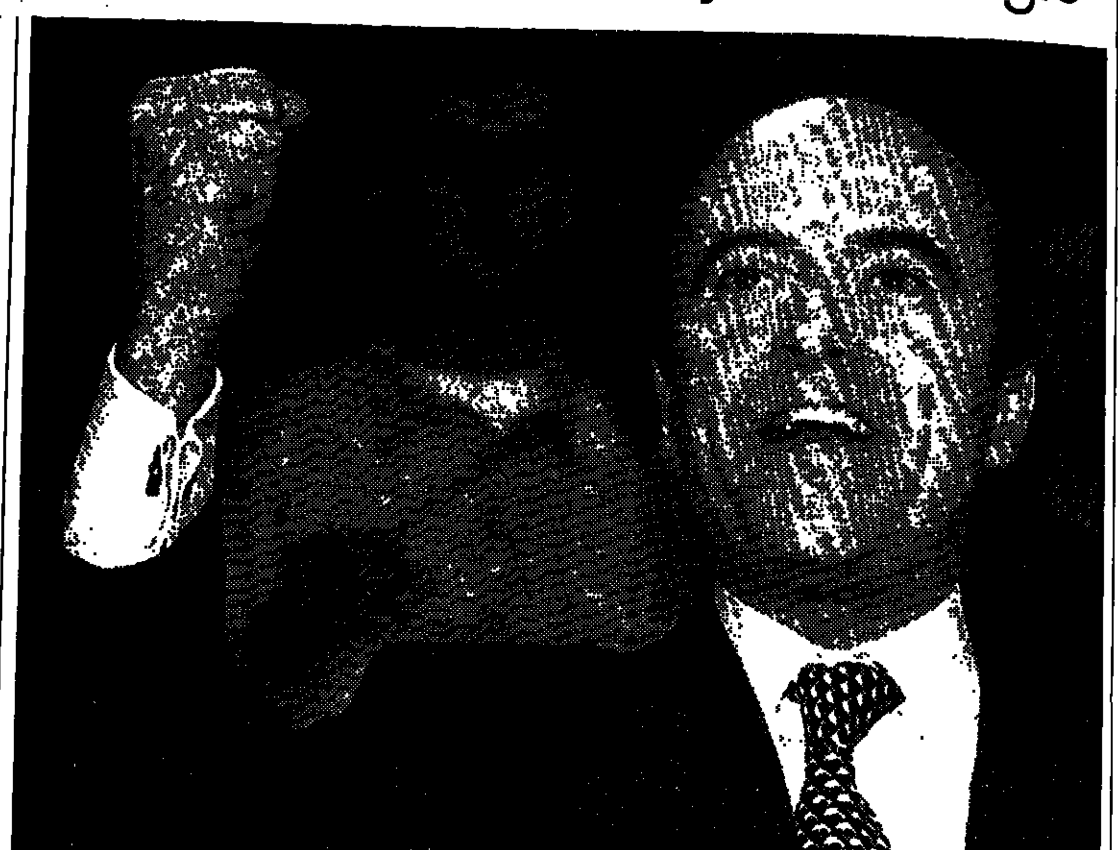
On Tuesday a fresh scandal broke. The finance minister, Jean Arthuis, in the middle of a tense battle to save the franc, was named in a party funding scandal centring on the Swiss franc.

Mr Arthuis, appointed less than two months ago after his predecessor, Alain Madelin, was sacked, has denied being involved in a scheme in which big French businesses deposited the equivalent of at least £3 million in a secret account in Geneva over a six-year period.

Reports in Monday's Le Monde that an examining magistrate had been told that Mr Arthuis knew of the fraud, involving his Social and Centre Democratic party (CDS), could not have come at a worse time.

International investors are already worried about the lack of rigour in France's budget. Any remaining confidence would be unlikely to survive another departure at the finance ministry. If Mr Arthuis is charged with complicity, he will have to step down.

● The crisis over the leadership of Nato deepened this week when the alliance's beleaguered secretary-general, Willy Claes, announced that he would make a last-ditch appeal this week to the Belgian parliament not to lift his immunity to prosecution on possible charges of corruption and fraud.



Defiant Gaullist . . . Alain Juppé greets his election as president of the RPR PHOTOGRAPH: JACQUES DEMARTHON

Right hails fall of Austrian coalition

Ian Traynor in Bonn

HALF a century of consensus government in Austria collapsed last week when the coalition of Social Democrats and Christian democrats broke up, heralding a snap poll before the end of the year which could edge the far-right populist leader Jörg Haider closer to power.

Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, the Social Democrat leader, bent on clinging to power to the end, opposed calling a new election a year after his party suffered its worst performance since the post-war second republic was founded.

But the cabinet's inability to agree on a budget sealed the government's fate. The coalition fell because the two sides could not agree whether to cut a serious budget deficit — by spending cuts or tax rises.

Last week Mr Vranitzky, chancellor since 1986, admitted he could no longer oppose early elections. He said the likeliest date for the poll was December 17 — nearly three years earlier than scheduled.

Parliament was dissolved last week, after which Mr Vranitzky and Wolfgang Schüssel, leader of the Christian democrat Austrian People's Party and his coalition partner, handed in the government's resignation to President Thomas Klestil. Theirs has been the shortest-lived administration since 1945.

"I wanted new elections to be avoided until the very last, but if parliament decides to hold elections then the president can do nothing against it," Mr Klestil said.

"They have acted like a bunch of amateurs," Mr Haider said. "We cannot accept that these losers stay in office. If voters make the Freedom party the decisive force, one cannot shirk the responsibility."

Mr Haider's views on the economy are close to those of Mr Schüssel, who may eventually have to turn to the Freedom Party as a partner.

The coalition's collapse appears to mark a break in the cosy post-war system in which the two big parties have ruled, more often than not in tandem, sharing out perks and privileges in the economy, the education system, the media and other areas.

Mr Haider has successfully portrayed himself as an iconoclast, railing against a corrupt system since seizing control of his Freedom Party more than nine years ago.

While support for the two big parties has plummeted, Mr Haider has consistently expanded his appeal. In a system in which no one can get a straight parliamentary majority, Mr Haider could conceivably overtake the People's Party as the second force in Austrian politics.

The government's collapse could signal a fundamental political realignment in which the cosy centrist partnership of the two big parties gives way to alliances between the Social Democrats, the Greens and the Liberals on the left and the [Roman Catholic] People's Party and the Freedom Movement on the right.

On the left, the Social Democrats remain the single biggest force. But their share of the vote in last October's poll was their worst performance since the war.

● Austrian police sought suspected rightwing extremists behind a new wave of letter bombs on Tuesday.

Political analysts feared the campaign ahead of the ballot could be disrupted by violent radicals whom the police have so far failed to stop in 22 months of sporadic attacks. — *Reuter*

Foetus 'given radiation dose'

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

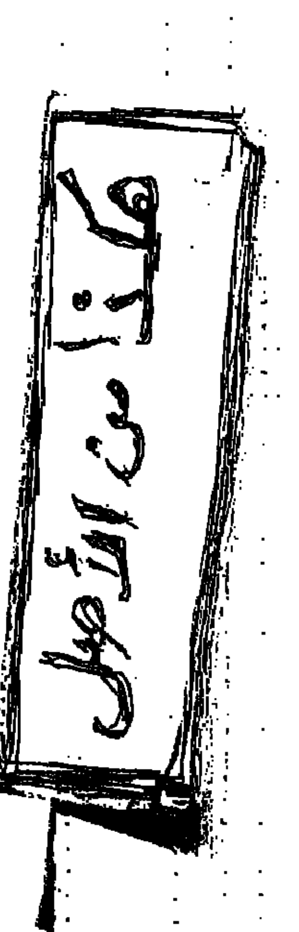
PRESSURE on working women not to have children has taken some extreme forms, but no one was prepared for this. A supervisor at one of America's leading medical institutes was accused last week of exposing a pregnant employee to radiation in an attempt to persuade her not to have a baby.

Dr Maryann Ma, a researcher at the National Institute of Health in Washington, claimed the radioactive substance P-32 was sprinkled on food she had left in a fridge at work in June, when she was 17 weeks pregnant.

Radiation experts said her risk of cancer had increased by 80 per cent, and that her foetus had received 12 times the annual federal limit.

The NIH did not deny deliberate contamination had occurred.

Dr Ma is expecting her child in December.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
October 22 1995

A nation's faith abused

Ireland's bishops have pledged never again to cover up sex scandals. **David Sharrock** questions whether they will keep their promise

NEARLY a year after the Irish government of Albert Reynolds was toppled by the case of Father Brendan Smyth, the "paedophile priest", the Catholic Church in Ireland continues to suffer the consequences. As next month's national referendum approaches to decide whether the republic's ban on divorce should be lifted, the bishops are struggling to restore confidence in the state's most powerful institution.

The end of Mr Reynolds's premiership, so soon after the triumph of peace in Northern Ireland, still raises some intriguing questions. The charge levelled at him by his partner Dick Spring, the Labour party leader who is still in government, was that the Fianna Fail chief was in breach of trust. In political terms that was the end of Brendan Smyth's significance — though the President of the High Court and an official in the Attorney General's office also had to resign.

But for the Church, the nightmare — a Jacobean tragedy which began with a dying priest receiving the last rites from two colleagues in a Dublin gay club, even as Mr Reynolds began to teeter — was only just beginning. Trust is at the heart of the problem: the faithful have been shaken by the seeming lack of honesty by the Church in its handling of the scandals.

Allegations of sexual abuse doubled in the wake of the Smyth scandal. After the last batch, the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre reported a 21 per cent increase in calls.

Even before the Smyth case, the authority of the Church had suffered a few knocks. The Bishop of Galway, Eamonn Casey, was uncovered as not just a spiritual but a physical father, with a son and former lover in the United States.

In the past month two more serious child sex-abuse cases have been laid at the Church's door. In both, compensation has been paid to victims for horrific attacks upon them by priests while they were altar boys during the 1970s. Vile though these offences were, it is the Church's response to the publicity surrounding the revelations that has, if anything, done more to shatter its claim of moral authority.

Both occurred within the diocese of Dublin, the wealthiest in Ireland. Its archbishop, Dr Desmond Connell, claimed that he had been libelled in a television documentary by the state broadcasting company, RTE. It revealed that in 1993 he lent IR £27,500 to a priest, Father Ivan Payne, to pay a civil claim for damages by a former altar boy, Andrew Madden. Less than 24 hours later, Dr Connell was forced to retract.

Worse was to follow. The Irish Times, usually censorious of the press's pursuit of unsavoury allegations against priests, devoted nearly a page to the harrowing story of a man so badly abused by a priest that on one occasion he blacked out. Alan O'Sullivan, now a 33-year-old architectural draughtsman, told the newspaper that Father Patrick Hughes had raped and taken pornographic photographs of him between the ages of nine and 11.

In this instance, the priest had paid £50,000 compensation without the assistance of the Dublin diocese. But the diocese had, nevertheless, played the role of legal conduit.

Both cases spoke in a singularly furtive voice of the Church's "pastoral" attitude to the horror of abuse committed by those whose religious rank enables them to exercise powerful authority over the vulnerable. As Mr O'Sullivan said, on recalling seeing the priest some years after the attacks took place: "It was almost worse than the actual abuse. It was like the cruel twist at the end of a film. The terrifying thing was that I had told everyone and nothing had happened, and here he is again."

It emerged that Father Payne holds a seat on the Church body that examines requests for marriage annulments — a process that often involves questioning couples about their sex lives. Earlier in his career he was a children's hospital chaplain. In 1982, two years after the alleged abuse against Mr Madden ended, Payne received psychiatric counselling and was, according to the diocese, "considered fit for ministry".

Father Hughes also "was referred for assessment by a consultant psychiatrist. He expressed the opinion that the priest was not suffering from a disorder which would prevent him from continuing in the ministry".

But who made these "assessments", and where are the two priests now? What confidence can Irish Catholics have that their Church will in future take a firmer line and involve the law-enforcing authorities?

As the Progressive Democrat MP Liz O'Donnell said in the Dail last week, the fact that the abusers remain at large with no criminal record raises questions about the Church's understanding of child abuse as a criminal matter. "What other category of paedophile could, in effect, buy his way out of the criminal process with the knowledge of the Church authority?"

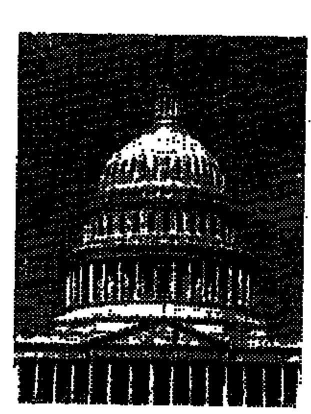
The bishops, meeting in Maynooth last week, attempted to regain the higher moral ground by pledging to report all serious sex allegations involving the clergy to the police. The Primate Cardinal Cahal Daly said he was deeply ashamed that some priests had been abusive of children. The words will be welcome, but action will also be required.

Will the faithful become "case-hardened" by it all? In the United States, the Catholic Church has paid out an estimated $650 million in compensation and legal fees over clerical sex abuse since the 1980s — but the faithful still flocked to see Pope John Paul.

Unless Dr Connell and his fellow bishops demonstrate that they are prepared to deal more honestly with the evil of abuse in their Church, rank-and-file mass attenders may soon learn to leave their priests to the mercy of the press.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
October 22 1995

Dole out-trumpets presidential rivals



The US this week

Martin Walker

THE OLD bull elephant of the Republican Party, Senator Robert Dole, left his presidential rivals to trumpet their "outsider" status through New Hampshire's glorious autumn foliage last week as he darted back to urgent congressional business in Washington.

In what little time he could spare from the campaign trail in Florida and Iowa and the imminent political Armageddon in Washington, Dole had maintained his authority in the candidates' first TV debate on Wednesday night. He had led a parade of the new conservative consensus on lower taxes and stern moral values, which leaves no place for the liberal Republican tradition. Even the lone pro-choice Republican on abortion, Senator Arlen Specter, claimed to be a true conservative, promising to "get governments off our backs, out of our pocketbooks and out of our bedrooms".

In the usual way of these debates, nobody triumphed and nobody flopped. But Dole set the tone with an unremitting attack on Bill Clinton as a man who "uses the presidency to spread fear and divide us against one another, destroying values he doesn't even understand . . . Whether it's balancing the budget, cutting taxes, reforming welfare or saving Medicare, President Clinton stands in the way. He is the barrier to change, raising your taxes, surrendering our interests to the United Nations."

Challenged on his age, 73 at the time of next year's election, Dole turned with an uncharacteristic smile to his nine Republican rivals, lined up in the TV studio in two rows like a jury, and said: "They look all right to me. I haven't missed a day of work in four years."

Dole sits on a dwindling but still commanding lead of 34 per cent in the polls over challengers all struggling to clamber out of single figures. But as Republican leader in the Senate he cannot escape the next four intense weeks of Washington battles over the budget and the other 12 bills required to keep the federal government running.

Another looming issue will be the decision to send US troops to help police a peace agreement in Bosnia, condemned outright as "a quagmire" by a clutch of the candidates last week. Dole, who has spent four years urging the US government to do more by arming the Bosnians, has so far ducked by saying Clinton "has yet to make the case to put American troops in harm's way". But congressional hearings are scheduled and a full Senate vote seems likely; after all, the prospect of US casualties and body-bags coming home in an election year is at stake.

Rather like President Clinton, who is his real rival, Dole is trapped in the responsibilities of office, and not only over Bosnia. His honest acknowledgement that the realities of congressional votes means the Republicans may not be able to secure their full $245 billion in promised tax cuts was seized on by Texas Senator Phil Gramm on the eve of the TV debate. He demanded that Dole sign his pledge to vote against anything less than the full tax cut. Dole ducked, even briefly leaving the TV studio as Gramm took the podium for his own 10 minutes of free airtime, to avoid having the pledge put to him before the TV audience.

Thanks to OJ Simpson's withdrawal from his own TV interview, the 10 Republican challengers had their first chance to appeal to a national audience, and to squabble among themselves for the right to be first to break out of the pack and confront Dole.

"By February, this contest will be down to Bob Dole and one of us," said California Congressman Bob Dornan, a far-right figure with few campaign funds, and thus with the licence to utter the truth that few others dare explore.

There is a further truth to the Republican predicament. The clutch of uninspiring Republican hopefuls who seek to challenge Clinton have depressed even the party faithful. Not one of them has caught fire. Many of the voters and local Republican activists, including the state's influential Governor Steve Merrill, are waiting to see whether Colin Powell jumps into the race.

A Powellian permafrost has settled over the Republican race, congealing the candidates in their places as they wait for the general to make up his mind. Speaker Newt Gingrich has been gingerly taking soundings about joining the race if prospects remain gloomy of a Republican capturing the White House next year.

A Republican win is looking less and less likely. The polls say that even Dole would lose to Clinton.

"Not one of them has an army that would walk through walls for him, except possibly Pat Buchanan. And none has that sense of the inevitable about his campaign, not even Bob Dole," grumbles Charles Arlinghaus, executive director of the New Hampshire Republican party.

Dole started off with more than 60 per cent in the New Hampshire polls in February, and is now down to 34 per cent. Across the country, the word is that his support is a mile wide and an inch thin. One of his most fervent backers, Ohio Governor George Voinovich, convened a conference of the state chieftains to back Dole, only to find them in full rebellion, and insisting they wait for the man they really want, Powell.



The only candidate whose New Hampshire polls are perceptibly rising is the rightwing firebrand Pat Buchanan, second at 9 or 13 per cent, depending on the poll. And despite lavish investments of time and money in this small state of 150,000 Republican voters, all the rest are struggling.

Steve Forbes, who has never run anything save the publishing empire he inherited, has spent $500,000 on New Hampshire TV time and is at 6 per cent in the polls. Gramm has spent millions already, mainly in the South, to reach just 7 per cent in the polls.

"I guess I feel a bit sorry for them," grins the veteran Democrat party boss, Chris Spirou. "The Republicans spent all this time telling us that Clinton was a sitting duck, and when it comes to candidates, they're firing blanks."

The Democrats are entitled to mock. They know how grim a clutch of lacklustre candidates can be, from "the seven dwarfs" of the 1988 campaign, which finally produced the disastrous Michael Dukakis.

Four years ago, when the recession had unemployment at 9 per cent and banks were foreclosing on family mortgages, the New Hampshire primary signalled the national mood of economic gloom that would defeat the George Bush presidency. But today, with unemployment at 3.6 per cent, even Buchanan is having trouble repeating his Bush-bashing fury of 1992.

With his plan to abolish all taxes on small businesses, financed by new tariffs on Japanese and Chinese goods, and a promise to walk out of the world trade system, Buchanan is getting some support with his "put America first" economic nationalism. He also has the endorsement of the one state newspaper, the infamous Manchester Union-Leader, which railed against John Kennedy as "the Number One threat to America", and ran one unforgettable article on a distinguised US secretary of state under the headline "Kissinger the kike — tool of the Communist conspiracy".

The two multi-millionaire businessmen, Forbes and Morry Taylor, have the funds to stay in the race, while Gramm and Lamar Alexander of Tennessee have both the funds and the political organisations. Gramm's Texas roots should give him most of the Southern primaries, and Buchanan will battle on through sheer stubbornness. The only black candidate, former diplomat Alan Keyes, takes his moral revivalist campaign against divorce and abortion to the churches and schools. But this remains an uninspiring parade.

Dole has no choice but to take his campaign back to Washington and the budget battles ahead. Meanwhile, his rivals will be roaming New Hampshire, where Republican voters traditionally expect to get to know the candidates in person, in a unique and intimate primary process that has every church hall and schoolroom and half the coffee mornings booked from now until election day on February 20.

"I don't know which one I'll pick," runs the old New Hampshire joke. "I only met some of these candidates twice." Consequently, the roads were thick with campaigning caravans last week, including one with a strolling band of players. Serenaded at stops by musicians playing Alexander's Ragtime Band, Alexander is walking across New Hampshire in his plaid shirt, claiming to be "the real Washington outsider" despite four years in the Bush cabinet. "Long enough to get vaccinated without getting infected," he says.

Alexander is at least opening a glorious new chapter in the annals of political suspense, and the burning question is whether one presidential candidate will be deliberately run over by another. Alexander, who was elected governor of Tennessee after walking across the state and being hit by a truck, wore his plaid shirt and hiking boots to an interview with the Wall Street Journal editorial board, who were not impressed. New Hampshire may warm to him — if he survives.

The only candidate having fun is Morry "the Tyre King" Taylor, a businessman who sold $15 million in stocks to mount a Ross Perot-lite campaign. He has Alexander in his sights: Taylor rented six distinctive Airstream caravans, and takes them round New Hampshire's country roads with a sound system that blares out Bruce Springsteen's Born In The USA, looking to make Alexander jump off the road again.

When his team gets a "Lamar ahead" alert, they turn off the sound system, speed up, and hit George Bush's former secretary of education with an airhorn blast fit to raise the dead. It is one of the funniest things in American politics. But then the Republicans do need cheering up.

A FEW crucial dates mark the next six weeks of intense politicking: December 15 is the deadline for entering the New Hampshire primary, decision day for Powell to decide whether or not to enter the Republican race; November 18 is the Florida straw poll among Republican activists in an important Southern state.

Winning this in 1991 turned Clinton into the Democratic front-runner. Dole has to win in Florida to maintain the perception of an unstoppable lead. Gramm needs to win to show his command of the South. Buchanan wants to do well to parade his strength on the right. Senator Specter of Pennsylvania could surprise them all, with his pro-choice views and his strength among the elderly Jewish voters who have retired to Florida. And Alexander has been working Florida very hard indeed.

Before that Florida straw poll, we shall know whether or not Dole has won his game of chicken with Clinton over the budget and over the debt ceiling limit. Both sides are growling "no compromise". Though the country could survive a series of stop-gap spending bills while White House and Congress lock horns over the draconian Republican budget, the global economy could be in trouble if the Republicans refuse to raise the debt ceiling and force the US Treasury into default on the $25 billion in bonds and debt interest that are due on November 15.

The world's main reserve currency has never defaulted before. The nearest it came was when the Bank of England went off the gold standard in 1931, and Americans are entitled to shudder at the memory of what followed. President Nixon took the dollar off the gold standard in 1971, which brought the great inflation of the 1970s.

The stability of the global economy is now at the mercy of presidential ambition. Any compromise by Dole will be pounced on by his rivals, while intransigence will be attacked by Clinton as putting politics before country. If this nonsense is not settled by early November, readers may wish to consider the attractions of Swiss francs. Bolder ones may flutter in gold futures.

Copycat clue to train crash

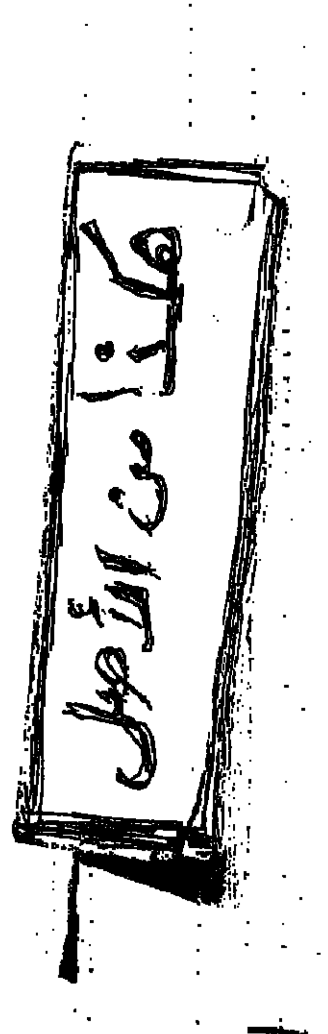
A RAILWAY buffs' whodunnit was unfolding last week as FBI agents focused their inquiry into sabotage of an Arizona passenger train on an eerily identical crash 50 years ago, *writes Jonathan Freedland.*

Federal investigators are poring over the latest edition of a specialist railway magazine which ran a detailed account of the 1939 Harney train disaster, in which 24 people died.

They believe the derailing last week, which killed one and injured more than 100 people, may have been a copy of the earlier incident in Nevada — also an act of sabotage.

Both cases involved westbound trains, travelling on track owned by the Southern Pacific Railroad. Both trains were derailed at the end of a bridge, both diverted into a stream bed. Both involved tricking the signalling system by maintaining an electric current between the two split rail ends. Historians say photographs of the two wrecks are all but indistinguishable.

● Investigators have released a typewritten note found at the crash scene which accuses the FBI of starting the fires in which 80 people died during the siege of the Branch Davidian compound near Waco, Texas in 1993, *reports the Observer*: Signed by the "Sons of the Gestapo", it says: "It is time for an independent federal agency to police the law enforcement agencies and other government employees."



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
October 22 1995

Paraguay's boom trade in babies

This woman's child was taken from her womb so that an American couple could have him. Children like hers also go to England. Price? £15,000. **Jan Rocha** reports

LUZ MIRANDA, 17 years old and nearly eight months pregnant, thought she was going for a pre-natal examination arranged by the woman she worked for as a maid, but then the nurses tied her down. When she struggled, they hit her.

"I cried for help and told them to stop but they just carried on. I told them I didn't want them to take my baby, then I felt the excruciating pain of the knife going in."

With only a local anaesthetic, in non-sterile surroundings, she had a caesarean section. Once the baby had been removed, Luz was abandoned in the back room of a clandestine nursery, in Asuncion, Paraguay. She was found because of a providential raid by judge Patricia Blasco, who has been investigating the illegal baby trade. But her wounds had become infected. Doctors had to give her massive blood transfusions to save her and she is scarred for life.

In August, thanks to BBC TV's Assignment programme, which went to Paraguay to investigate the baby trade, she was finally reunited with her daughter, prematurely torn from her because an adoption lawyer urgently needed a baby for prospective parents arriving from abroad.

Dionisia Gonzalez is a married woman with five children. Her husband's wages as a building labourer are very low: the family lives in a one-room shack on the outskirts of Asuncion. One day a woman appeared at her door saying she was the boss's wife and that Dionisia's husband had suffered a terrible accident and been taken to hospital. She said she would take Dionisia there, and told her to bring her 10-month-old baby, Rodrigo.

At the hospital she offered to hold him while Dionisia, distraught, rushed in to look for her injured husband. He was not there and when she came out the woman and Rodrigo had disappeared. Dionisia hunted for him, walking the streets because she had no money for transport, appealing on a radio programme where she read out a letter to him: "Are you all right, Rodrigo; are you thirsty, hungry, are you crying, are you upset because we aren't with you?"

Her agony lasted two months until the same judge, who later found Luz, organised a raid on a clandestine *guardaria* (nursery) and found 29 babies and small children packed into cots in small dark rooms, waiting to be adopted. As soon as new parents were found they would be transferred — by then better-fed and dressed in new clothes — to a shiny new nursery.



Luz Miranda shows the scar from the caesarean operation that almost killed her PHOTOS: GISELLE PORTENIER

Rodrigo was so thin and pale that Dionisia was only sure it was her son when she recognised his birthmark; he was also covered in severe nappy rash. Another baby was so sick that he died in hospital. Rodrigo went back to the one-room shack. Now he is three years old, but still scared of strangers. Dionisia cries when she remembers those days.

Every year hundreds of childless couples arrive in Paraguay to adopt a baby, 90 per cent from the US, the rest from the UK, Europe and Israel. They come in ignorance of the misery behind Paraguay's booming adoption trade. They believe they are involved in a legal process. They have paid up to £15,000 to an adoption agency, had a home study done, been interviewed by social workers. Many have made financial sacrifices to pay the costs. One couple mortgaged their home and sold their car.

While they wait in Asuncion for the paperwork to go through, which can take months, couples can have their baby staying with them, often in the city's most comfortable hotels. At the Gran Hotel del Paraguay, once the favourite haunt of travellers and writers, waiters manoeuvre round high chairs as they serve dinner, while the squawk of parrots in the gardens is almost drowned by baby cries.

Paraguay has no official adoption agency. Instead, a couple may be in the hands of a lawyer who arranges court hearings, translators, babysitters, hotels — and the baby. In some of the guardarias each cot has the lawyer's name on it.

The demand caused by falling fertility in industrialised countries has transformed what was once a humanitarian act — finding new parents for an unwanted or orphaned child — into a trade dominated by a small group of unscrupulous lawyers. Paraguay, a Catholic country with strong family values, has very few orphaned or unwanted children, but it does have thousands of poor, often illiterate, women, whose babies can be bought, taken by deceit or even stolen.

Only 30 per cent of babies from such countries are given up voluntarily, believes Dr Ruben Riquelme, head of the Judicial Investigation Centre attached to the imposing law courts, but actually situated in a few rooms in a hospital morgue. (It is also a career dead-end.)

At Interpol's request, the centre is now investigating a baby-smuggling ring, discovered when Belgian police intercepted a Paraguayan couple at Brussels airport. They were about to hand over a newborn baby to an Israeli couple, and they confessed to taking another five babies into Europe in the previous six months.

THE CENTRE raided the Asuncion home of one of the ringleaders and found more than 100 photos of babies and children and a pile of blank birth certificates, evidence which has mysteriously disappeared inside the labyrinth of the palace of justice.

Fraudulent birth certificates and false "mothers" who swear they are voluntarily giving up their babies are used by the traders. In 1990, an English family came to Paraguay and adopted a two-year-old girl. Before they left she became ill, so the lawyer found another child to take her place, using the identity papers of the first child. After a year in England the adoptive parents rejected her, and she was taken into care by the local authority. Now she has been adopted by another English family.

American couples complete the adoption process in Paraguay, and the child leaves as a US citizen. UK couples have to complete the adoption process in England, taking the baby out of Paraguay with the mother's permission and a travel permit from the National Department for the Protection of Children, many of which have been falsified. British couples in Paraguay and in the UK refused to be filmed. Some threatened injunctions to stop the programme being shown.

Several of the most notorious adoption lawyers have been charged with child-trafficking. However, as yet none of the cases has come to trial

Left: an American in Asuncion has her baby finger-printed, the last stage in the formal adoption process

Several of the most notorious adoption lawyers have been charged with baby-stealing and child-trafficking. One spent five months on remand in prison in 1993, but none of the cases has come to trial because of missing evidence and reluctant witnesses. The adoption lawyers started a vicious campaign to discredit the judge who tried to stop the trade by raiding clandestine nurseries; she had to abandon the raids.

Victor Llano and Sonia Tellechea, the two judges who between them authorise most of the international adoptions (as many as 16 in one day), were accused by the American Association of Jurists of being "complacent" with the fraudulent and illegal aspects of many adoptions and of ignoring the constitutional rights of children. Judge Llano's answer to all criticisms is that adoption is better than abortion.

The lawyers who specialise in adoption have found themselves an easy way to make money, taking advantage of foreigners' desperation for a baby and of poor women's vulnerability in a country where social inequality is huge (and where nearly 40 years of violent repression under dictator General Alfredo Stroessner has left a legacy of submission). The lawyers' defence is that they are finding good homes for the babies bred by ignorant girls.

GROWING demand has boosted international adoptions in Paraguay from a few 10 years ago, when each cost only $200-$300, to more than 600 cases a year now. Besides the formal adoptions, an unknown number of babies is smuggled abroad. Childless Paraguayan couples say they cannot compete with the prices paid by overseas couples.

Last month, the Paraguayan Congress, under pressure from human rights campaigners, voted to suspend international adoptions for one year while safeguards are introduced. The lawyers lobbied hard against suspension, but they were also prepared for it. In the days before it became law they filed scores of new adoption applications, enough to keep them busy for months. Now it is just a question of finding the babies.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

West murder trial shocks press into self-restraint

SELF-CENSORSHIP is not an offence of which the British press is often accused other than, perhaps, in times of war. On the contrary, the loudest current complaint is over its lack of self-restraint: the seemingly insatiable appetite of the big-selling tabloids for lurid sexual detail and intrusion into personal lives. The "murder trial of the century" seems to be changing all that.

The case of Mrs Rosemary West, who denies murdering 10 young women and girls (including her own daughter and step-daughter) started with a bang, when the prosecution's opening statement was reported at length in the broadsheet papers, and spread over many pages in the popular tabloids. As the witnesses began to give their grisly evidence, however, coverage was rapidly scaled down and sanitised.

The top-selling Sun (circulation: 4 million) splashed the evidence of the first witness — "My sex hell with Rose West" — in which Caroline Owens described how she was blindfolded, gagged, tortured, then raped by the defendant's husband, Fred West, who committed suicide while on remand. A few days later, its reporting, like that of most others, was down to a few hundred words, buried inside the paper.

As though by general consent, editors decided it was more than their readers could stomach. "A normal person can't take too much of it," said Richard Stott, editor of Today, which has a youngish readership biased towards women. The BBC, whose reporters on the case are being offered counselling, ordered a minimum of detail after hearing the horrendous nature of the uncensored evidence. "You will never get the full horror from the BBC," promised its head of daily news programmes, Mark Damazer.

The verdict is some weeks away yet, and few stories ever command prominence for that length of time. There is an argument, however, that the media have a duty to tell the whole truth rather than play nanny; that the doctored accounts of the West trial mean that the public has no idea what it is being shielded from. The likelihood is that commercial considerations were given priority. To exceed the bounds of public taste and decency could mean the loss of readers.

ELECTRICITY customers were warned that they could lose a £50 rebate if Labour succeeds in delaying the flotation of the National Grid, planned for December. The shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown, is prepared to risk alienating the customers — potential Labour voters — by trying to halt the sale until more is known about the scale of the profits that will be made by directors of the regional electricity companies, which jointly own the Grid.

Mr Brown was enraged by a disclosure that top executives stand to share a £6 million shares windfall when the transmission business is sold. "The fat cats are becoming so bloated they can hardly move," he stormed. "The greed of these people needs to be investigated immediately. The customer and the taxpayer are being ripped off. It is they who should be benefiting."

The "fat cats" of the public utilities have become figures of opprobrium because of their inflated salaries and self-awarded bonuses and share options. One of the fattest is Cedric Brown, chief executive of British Gas, who garnered a pay rise last year of 75 per cent to £475,000. British Gas has now dreamed up another executive incentive scheme, but Mr Brown, who stood to gain up to £2 million from it, said that he had waived his rights.

MORE TURMOIL was threatened in the National Health Service when general practitioners said they would leave the service if a Labour government abolished the fund-holding system that gives them relative autonomy in patient care. Although some doctors remain hostile to the system, more and more are embracing a scheme that gives them government money to buy hospital services for their patients wherever they wish.

Dr Rhidian Morris, leader of the National Association of Fundholding Practices, insisted that the scheme offered patients speedier and better treatment, and that its abolition would damage the NHS by driving middle-class patients into the burgeoning private health care sector.

A SOFTLY-SOFTLY approach to drug-taking was recommended by the Headmasters' Conference (HMC), representing the posh public schools, when it met in Dublin. While state schools are instructed that drug incidents should always be reported to police, HMC advises that, while police should be informed about the use of hard drugs, an isolated incident involving cannabis might not need such action.

The adoption of this "flexible" policy was followed next day by the expulsion of six pupils from Wisbech Grammar School — an HMC school in Cambridgeshire — for possessing and supplying cannabis. "The HMC can make all sorts of policies, but schools will take what action they think best," said the headmaster, Bob Repper.

Back in the state sector, the Government is planning a new national professional qualification for head teachers. The scheme will not apply to serving heads, but Education Secretary Gillian Shephard said applicants would eventually be expected to possess the qualification.







Galliano's ... collection stuns Paris

Sally Brampton

CRASH barriers were ... on the Avenue Mont... Paris on Sunday as the Br... designer, John Galliano, unveiled his new collectio...

Galliano, who has shot ... ternational prominence in ... past two years, was recent... pointed as creative head of ... House of Givenchy. Althou... due to debut with the Giv... couture collection until Ja... Galliano is already deep in ... research in the house's ar... This eponymous collection ... will be continuing with his ... label) was, in effect, a dre... rehearsal — at least in the ... of the fashion world.

After the triumphs of his ... two collections, the questio... everybody's lips was, coul... pull it off again? The answe... a resounding yes. The colle... titled Galliano's Ecole de D... was his most ambitious to d...

He roved across centuri... cultures, mixing the lyrical ... prettiness of an 18th centu... pastoral idyll in white orga... jackets fitted close to the b... and short skirts swinging ... pleated chiffon swags, with ... stern sobriety of his Spanis... background in severely tail... and abbreviated black line... jackets sliced over tight bla... trousers.

The balletic scene of the co... lection's title (left) was sho... deep rose silk corsets with ... swagged skirts flying over p... of white net tutus.

Boom in NHS managers

David Brindle

SOME health service trusts are spending proportionately up to five times as much as others on managers, the first official league table of its kind has revealed.

The unpublished table prompted ministers to act to curb NHS management costs in measures announced last week by Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary.

The move follows mounting public disquiet about a 400 per cent increase in health managers during the past five years, as well as controversy over their pay and perks. The number of managers in England increased 15 per cent last year to 23,350.

According to the league table, English trusts spent £816 million on management in 1994/95 with expenditure ranging from 2.1 per cent of total budgets to 10.8 per cent.

The table will prompt protests from many smaller trusts, which argue that their management costs look proportionately bigger because they do not benefit from economies of scale. The Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital, which emerges worst, is shown to have spent 10.8 per cent of its £3.2 million budget on management last year but the trust employs only about 70 staff.

London's Chelsea and Westminster hospital in and the Freeman hospitals in Newcastle have the lowest figures, of 2.1 per cent.

Civil servants' neutrality 'abused' by ministers

Richard Norton-Taylor

SIR Robin Butler, the cabinet secretary, is drawing up new guidelines on the activities of civil servants, amid evidence that their status as politically-neutral officials is being abused by ministers.

He has asked Whitehall's permanent secretaries to monitor ministers' instructions to civil servants to attend, or speak at, meetings of political pressure groups.

The move is believed to have been sparked by instructions from ministers — including Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister — to civil servants to address conferences organised by the rightwing Adam Smith Institute, which promotes privatisation and the free market.

Officials have been told to speak at two seminars arranged by the group — one on the Government's Private Finance Initiative, designed to encourage private sector funding for public works; the other on the transfer of employment rights from the public to the private sector.

Sir Robin, who is also head of the Civil Service, expressed his concern in a letter last month to Sir Terry Burns, permanent secretary at the Treasury. "The basic principle is that civil servants may not attend, in their official capacity, a conference or function convened by, or under the aegis of, a UK party political organisation," he ... They should take care, he sa... "to avoid giving the appearan... compromising political imp... ity".

Sir Robin listed three catego... of organisations. He describe... CBI and the TUC as groups ... "leanings to one end of the pol... spectrum or the other". Civil ... vants could speak there, he sa... they were merely "explainin... clared government policy o... processes of government".

In a second category — descr... as groups where membership ... particular political party is a c... tion of membership — civil serv... must never attend meetings in ... official capacity, he said.

He placed the Adam Smith I... tute — with the rightist Institu... Economic Affairs, the Fabian So... and the left-leaning Institute of P... Policy Research — in a category ... groups "with very strong p... associations with political parti...

Instructions to officials to at... Adam Smith Institute meetings ... provoked an angry letter to ... Robin from Liz Symons, general ... retary of the First Division Asso... tion, which represents senior ... servants. "It is exactly this sor... lack of judgment which is makin... so hard for those of us who bel... that the Civil Service is politi... neutral to persuade others of ... case," she told Sir Robin last we...

In Brief

AN INTENSIVE round of talks to break the deadlock in the Irish peace process began on Tuesday as the Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, met Irish and US officials in London, ahead of President Clinton's visits to London and Belfast next month.

THE HERITAGE Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, was put on the defensive as criticism mounted over the distribution of lottery funds. More than £42 million of the Arts Council's latest award went to two London groups — Sadler's Wells dance company and the reconstruction of Shakespeare's Globe theatre.

FIVE young British doctors and medical students on attachment to a hospital in South Africa were killed in Swaziland in a head-on car crash with an articulated lorry.

DOZENS of people given LSD in mental hospitals in the 1950s and 1960s have won legal aid to investigate a possible claim for compensation.

TWO Lancashire policewomen who admitted supplying amphetamines and cannabis for a friend were jailed for 12 months.

SEVENTEEN thousand tonnes of nuclear waste were discovered lying in shallow water off the Channel island of Alderney.

SUPERMARKET chains were sharply criticised by cancer charities over the launch of cheap own-brand cigarettes.

ASDA continued the retail price war by discounting branded vitamins, mineral and dietary supplements. The store also plans to cut the price of non-prescription drugs such as headache and indigestion remedies.

CRIME writer Edith Pargeter (Ellis Peters), who wrote the Brother Cadfael series, has died aged 82. She requested her final novel be left with the crime unresolved.

NUCLEAR Electric, fined £250,000 last month for a serious accident it covered up, was fined a further £13,000 after admitting another safety breach at Hinkley Point A power station in Somerset.

A CONTRACT mining engineer in Nottinghamshire suffocated after the most serious colliery accident this year. Coal union leaders said the accident rate has risen significantly since privatisation.

SALES of National Lottery Instants scratchcards topped £1 billion. The cards have become the UK's biggest impulse brand, beating Coca-Cola four times over.

Howard fires jails chief over escapes

Alan Travis

THE Home Secretary, Michael Howard, sacked Derek Lewis as Director-General of the Prison Service on Monday after the publication of a damning official inquiry into the escape of three prisoners from Parkhurst high security prison on the Isle of Wight earlier this year.

Mr Lewis immediately accused Mr Howard of disloyalty and political interference. He took the astonishing step of publishing a scathing four-page letter to the Home Secretary documenting how Mr Howard had tried to resist being made the scapegoat.

Mr Lewis points out that he was asked to resign at the weekend, before Mr Howard had to make a statement in the Commons on Monday, and, with the backing of the Prison Service board, had refused.

The decision by Mr Lewis not to go quietly exposes the Home Secretary to renewed pressure for his own resignation.

The report by General Sir John Learmont concluded that the breakout had disclosed "a chapter of errors at every level and a naivety that defies belief".

In his letter to Mr Howard, Mr Lewis says he was given only 45 minutes to discuss the findings of the Learmont report and the Prison Service response to it: "I do not consider this adequate in order to reach a proper view on such an important decision."

Mr Lewis says in his letter that it had been a "great disappointment" to him that in the 13 months since the armed IRA breakout at Whitemoor jail, Mr Howard had "required so much paper but had paid so little attention to prisons themselves with only six visits".

Mr Lewis wrote that "the split between your responsibility for policy and mine for operations has become thoroughly confused".

He concluded: "Whitemoor and Parkhurst have both been severe blows and embarrassments to the Service, which it has been determined to put right. What the Service most needs at this juncture is continuity, consistency and genuine ministerial support. It is a matter of great regret that you have not chosen to give it that support."

The Home Secretary insisted in the Commons that the Learmont report placed the blame for Parkhurst ultimately at the level of the Prisons Board: "Sir John has not found that any policy decision of mine, directly or indirectly, caused the escape."

The Government's Chief Inspector of Prisons, Judge Stephen Tumim, pointed out on Monday that the question of ultimate responsibility rested on the response to a warning letter about security failings he sent to the Home Secretary two months before the Parkhurst escape.

Home Office sources insisted that the Home Secretary had passed the letter to Mr Lewis for a response and the director-general had assured him work had been put in hand that day to correct the deficiencies. Mr Howard had accepted his assurance.

On Monday Mr Lewis disputed this version. He said he talked to the Home Secretary again about the action he had personally taken. "I asked him: 'What else do you think I could or should have done to prevent Parkhurst?' He replied: 'I don't know but it was your job'."

Expanding his criticism, Mr Lewis said: "Of course, ministers must have information. What is a problem is when they question operational decisions."

Mr Lewis is expected to receive about £200,000 in compensation. He will be replaced in the short term by Richard Tilt, currently the service's head of security.

Mr Howard told the Commons that he accepted the broad thrust of Sir John Learmont's report with its 127 recommendations. He said he would wait six months before making a decision on the key recommendation of a new single "supermax" prison to hold Britain's most dangerous prisoners.

He accepts the report's recommendations that Parkhurst should never have been a high security prison and that its role should be taken over by Belmarsh jail in south-east London.

The report found: "The fact that so much is wrong with the Prison Service appears to be finally dawning. Since the start of the inquiry, a series of audits has confirmed that Whitemoor and Parkhurst were not aberrations of the norm but symptomatic of the practices in place in similar establishments throughout the country."

The report went on to say that jails were drowning under paperwork. On one calculation, the prisons of England and Wales would receive a pile of paperwork around a mile high during a four-month period. Prison Service headquarters was asked by the inquiry team to produce copies of all correspondence with ministers over a period of 83 days. It amounted to just over 1,000 documents.

● Mr Howard won a victory in the High Court over "closed" visits — through a glass screen with no contact — for IRA prisoners in English maximum security jails. Two prisoners claimed the closed visits were a fundamental breach of human rights. The victory follows seven rulings against him over the past two years.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
October 22 1995

Major wages the 'fight of our lives'

Michael White

JOHN MAJOR last week launched his counter-offensive against Tony Blair in a Tory conference speech which sought to reclaim the political middle ground while accusing New Labour of still being hopelessly behind fast-changing challenges in the global economy.

In his attempt to snatch a fifth Tory general election victory, the Prime Minister unveiled a strategy to make Britain the "Enterprise Centre for Europe" — in contrast to what he insisted were the Labour modernisers' out-dated views on economic management.

Raising his game to galvanise activists for the uphill contest ahead, Mr Major declared: "All elections are important, but the next is a watershed, because whoever wins will inherit the strongest economy for decades." Since the Tories had built it with no help from Labour, Mr Major said he would wage the "fight of our lives" to win.

He proclaimed: "Beat Labour one more time and we've beaten socialism out of this country for good."

He continued: "I don't doubt Labour's good intentions: the road to hell is paved with Labour's good intentions."

In the most effective speech of his five-year premiership and the first since 1992 to be free of a looming leadership crisis, Mr Major coupled political knockabout with a clutch of nearly-new policy initiatives: 5,000 extra police on the beat, 10,000 more street surveillance TV cameras, a British version of the FBI, a doubling of the assisted places scheme and a "contract for work" to "discipline" the unemployed.

There were also further strong, but unspecific, promises of tax cuts, including eventual abolition of capital gains and inheritance taxes.

In terms more balanced than most last week, Mr Major told activists that they should remember that most European Union states supporting federalism did so from a recent history of "war, dictatorship, civil war, military occupation", in contrast to undefeated Britain.

"If we want to persuade our partners that their policies for Europe are wrong — and I believe passionately that many of their policies are wrong — we must use our imagination to understand their feelings and their motives."

The Blackpool conference rewarded Mr Major with the ritual standing ovation and Land of Hope and Glory, leaving party business managers relieved that a potentially disastrous week had been salvaged and morale repaired.

Will Hutton, page 13



Leading figures were asked what they would like to give Lady Thatcher for her 70th birthday last week. Lord Archer, former deputy Tory chairman, said: 'I shall be giving her a first edition of a book published in 1925, the year of her birth, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes.' But what should lesser mortals buy? Lady Thatcher's daughter Carol said: 'People are ringing me up to ask me what they should get. Well, I have to confess, I'm stumped myself.'

Judge scorns Howard's jail package

Alan Travis

THE Home Secretary's political initiative to rebuild the Tories' law and order credentials with a package of longer sentences for habitual criminals was ambushed by Britain's most senior judge, the Lord Chief Justice.

Within two hours of Michael Howard's speech to the Conservatives at Blackpool last week, Lord Taylor, in an extraordinary warning, said that the package of longer sentences would do little to deter the repeat offender. "What deters them is the likelihood of being caught, which at the moment is small," he said.

The law and order package had been designed to be a key measure in triggering a recovery by the Conservatives in the opinion polls. But Lord Taylor's comments marked the opening of constitutional hostilities between the Home Secretary and the senior judiciary over the independence of the courts.

Penal reformers suggested that the package could raise the prison population by a further 15,000. It has already risen by 25 per cent to a record 52,000 in the 18 months since Mr Howard proposed his "prison works" policy.

But to the delight of the conference, Mr Howard answered renewed demands from delegates for the introduction of compulsory identity cards by unveiling his plan for longer sentences. He said: "Some people won't like it. They'll say it's too tough. I've got a simple answer. If you don't want the time, don't do the crime."

The package includes a US-style "three strikes and you're out" for habitual burglars and hard drug dealers, who will face an automatic minimum prison sentence for a third conviction.

The other two principal parts include the abolition of automatic early release and parole, and the introduction of mandatory life sentences for repeat rapists, attempted murderers and other violent offenders.

Jack Straw, the shadow home secretary, described Mr Howard's speech as "a bizarre mixture" of complacency and desperation. "He was complacent about the level of recorded crime, which has more than doubled under the Tories, and desperate because he knows that the Tories are no longer trusted on law and order," he said.

The Prison Reform Trust warned Mr Howard that if he imported American sentencing Britain would end up with the US system of spending more on prisons than it did on schools.

Police and Tory activists gave a predictably warm welcome to Mr Howard's "get tough" reforms. The president of the Association of Chief Police Officers, John Hoddinott, said: "Police officers and the public will welcome these approaches to tackling serious offending."

The Penal Affairs Consortium, which represents all those working in the prison system, including governors, said the proposals were riddled with injustice, which would remove a massive incentive for good behaviour. "It will greatly increase the risk of riots, violence and hostage-taking in long-term prisons," said Paul Cavadino, Consortium spokesman.

Comment, page 12

Grown-up end to infantile week

COMMENTARY
Hugo Young

JOHN MAJOR has always claimed he is the only man who could keep the Tory party together. Last week he showed he is the only man remotely fit to lead it. Five years on, the job may be slipping from him. But he gave notice of the fight he will make to keep the Tories in power, something no other member of the Cabinet would have a chance of doing.

He rescued a dismal week for the Conservative governing class. Most ministers ponced and postured their way through speeches addressed to the illusion the Conservative Party entertains, that it is the only audience that matters. Most people who came to Blackpool had lost all capacity to see the world as others see it. Appeasing them was presented by the party giants as the accomplishment, above all others, that proved their mastery of politics.

All the party wanted to hear, it seemed, was that Britain is the greatest. British soldiers, British policemen, British capitalists, British culture: all were, thanks entirely to Tories, the finest in the world.

This was a narrow, self-referential, often nauseating and infantile parade. From Michael Portillo to Michael Heseltine, we heard arch confections offered to an audience only too delighted to feast upon them.

Mr Major's was the first speech that attempted to address the nation he leads as well as the party. He made his colleagues look like strutting pygmies. Even the famous deputy prime minister must slink below the salt.

Some of Mr Major's own promises were pretty narrowly aimed. Who but a tiny fragment will care about doubling assisted places at public schools, or abolishing capital gains tax? But the tone was large, the message strikingly unmanufactured.

As emphatically as Tony Blair, therefore, the leader is the leader. At 20 points behind and holding, as the election draws ever nearer, he also seems at ease with his predicament. Rather more so than Mr Blair.

Blair, the man with everything to prove, meets Major, the governing man, who exhibits an eerie calm that makes the Leader of the Opposition sound a trifle frenetic.

We learned more about how the Tories will deal with Mr Blair. After weeks of cogitation, they have decided there is no point in pretending he's Dennis Skinner. The conversion scandal is more their bag, although it runs the risk of making Mr Blair's own case that he is the leader of Middle Britain. Mr Major, however, portrayed him as a Fettes toff, the same smooth-handed fellow, innocent of toil or hardship, that the left are always deriding.

By contrast, the true man of the people offers his father's failed garden-gnomes business as his degree from the university of life, against the educated thinness of Labour sound-bites.

That, and Bosnia. Not to mention Northern Ireland. All in all, two fine conference leader-speeches make clear what sort of contest is beginning to take shape. Mr Blair, the aspirant and idealist, will be pitted against Mr Major, the realist leathered by world experience. Obscured by dirty tricks and incessant media manipulation, that will be the essential combat.

Mr Major exposed the issues on which he intends to fight. Three are populist, one is eccentric, all have the merit of attracting his utter certainty that he is on the right side.

Crime and punishment, first, may be bad for the Tories but it's worse for Labour. In carving up the fearsome package between himself and Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, Mr Major took much the better bits.

Where Mr Howard promised more prisons and had the Lord Chief Justice denouncing him within the hour, Mr Major made sensible proposals for more policemen and giving MI5 something to do against the drugs barons. Labour will find this hard to handle. Even the ominous suggestion of a British FBI, yet another centralising measure by this insatiably power-hungry central government, may get through on the opposition nod.

THE enterprise economy, second, is the defining image the Tories have decided to give themselves. It's what they think most people believe distinguishes them from Labour. Mr Major spoke with no great eloquence about it, but it is the summation of what he has shed blood to protect, whether against the social chapter or, heaven help him, the excesses of corporate greed in a free society.

Third, plainly, comes Europe. The conference needed some balance here, some roping back from the wilder shores of crazed, mendacious anti-Brussels mania, and the Prime Minister behaved ministerially.

When he talked of musing "in the watches of the night" about the problems Europe makes for party and country, you could believe him. When he opposed federalism, he had the good sense not to say what it meant. But it's obvious he's getting ready, by exploiting the same imprecision, to tar Labour with the federalist smear.

As with law-and-order, in short, he took a stride towards recapturing the central agenda. Terrified of losing the middle ground they think they've won, Labour will most probably follow him.

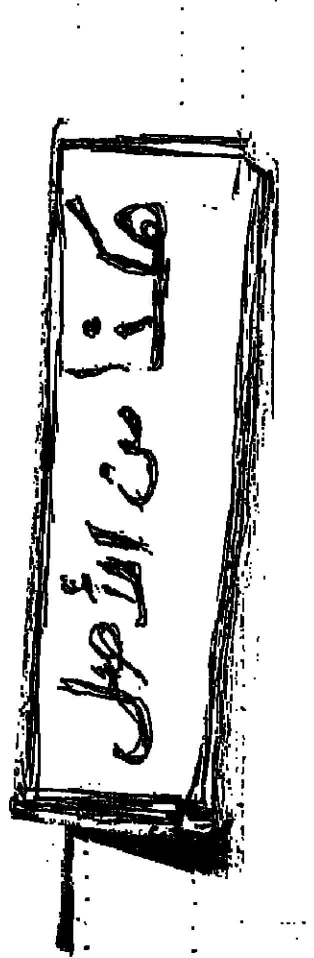
With these three main issues — crime, the economy, Europe — the tone may be different and the Tory record open to baleful scrutiny, but the promises are likely to be very much the same.

But then Mr Major came to the constitution. This is his eccentricity. Not because many Tories differ, but because so few voters care at all. He brings a personal zeal to his belief that self government for Scotland means the break-up of this great United Kingdom of ours.

Last week, Mr Major was beside himself with indignant gravitas, boiling over with a passion that the British as a whole should somehow supersede the stupid Scots, who are clearly determined to bring "constitutional chaos" to this land. He thinks this won him the last election. And, if the next war looks so bleak, it may be hard to criticise a leader who likes re-fighting the last one.

Besides, Mr Major has problems piling up of which Blackpool heard nothing. Chief among these is the fragility of the tax-cutting prospect. As Waldegrave, Clarke, Rifkind and Lyell trooped through the conference halls, one remembered that these were men the Scott report could yet hole below the credit line.

But the leader made the most of it. He had watched the week with rather distant approval but spoke as a leader from whom none present will dissent. The Tories are a menace, even when they are on the skids.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
October 22 1995

Portillo waves the right flag

Michael White and Patrick Wintour

MICHAEL PORTILLO signalled in the most emphatic terms yet that John Major's government is planning to unite the Conservative party on a nationalist, anti-European platform in its campaign to stave off defeat in the next general election.

In an emotional but largely content-free speech, which brought the Conservative conference in Blackpool to its feet, the Defence Secretary wrapped his party in "the history that created a sovereign nation" and accused Tony Blair's New Labour of endorsing "withdrawal, retreat and surrender to European federalism".

Mr Portillo's speech, which the Prime Minister went out of his way to endorse, came on a day when Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind's shift to the right over Europe won the approval of hard-line Euro-sceptics such as John Redwood, Norman Lamont, Norman Tebbit and Sir Teddy Taylor.

In a passage which pledged the Government never to let British foreign and defence policy be "dictated to us by a majority vote of the council of ministers", Mr Portillo claimed that Brussels would have denied Britain permission to reconquer the Falklands in 1982.

"We will not allow Brussels to control our defence policy," he insisted. "Britain will not be told when to fight and when not to fight. Britain is blessed with very brave soldiers, sailors and airmen, willing to give their lives — for Britain, not for Brussels."

As for the future, he said, "the European Commission might want to harmonise uniforms and cap badges, or even to metricate them. The European Court would probably want to stop our men fighting for more than 40 hours a week. They would probably have sent half of them home on paternity leave."

He concluded: "The SAS has a famous motto: Who Dares Wins. We will dare, we will win." The conference roared.

The infighting on Europe — just what Tory business managers did not want as Parliament returns from its summer break — will be underscored when up to 50 pro-European backbench MPs see Mr Rifkind this week to demand he regain a grip on policy towards Europe.

The MPs, some of whom have regrouped under the new banner of the Macleod Group (after the left-wing Tory chancellor Iain Macleod) are expected to warn Mr Rifkind that his predecessor, Douglas Hurd, would not have permitted the Defence Secretary to damage British interests.

Mr Rifkind, in his conference speech, had pointedly chosen to reject the concept of "the nation state of Europe" as well as practical measures which threaten British interests such as greater majority voting, while praising Nato and embracing a favourite Thatcherite project, the North Atlantic Free Trade Area.

Mr Rifkind announced that the Government is to "work with our allies on both sides of the Atlantic towards transatlantic free trade" as a step towards global free trade.

Mr Portillo conceded that he supported practical moves for greater defence co-operation by European countries, including within the Western European Union, particularly over peacekeeping, but he did not support such co-operation occurring under the aegis of the European Union since this would reduce politicians' control over their own defence forces.

"The essential element of British defence policy will continue to be the Atlantic Alliance. It remains for me unimaginable to think about the defence of Europe without considering the interests of the US and the Canadians."

At the weekend, Mr Portillo defied a renewed spate of criticism from pro-European Tory MPs and the European Commission president, Jacques Santer, by asserting he did not regret a single word of his Blackpool speech.

The Defence Secretary insisted: "Je ne regrette rien". Speaking on BBC TV's On The Record, he explained: "I stripped away all the waffle and fudge and any Euro-speak, and I said that any Conservative government is not going to allow Britain to be drawn into a European superstate."

Mr Santer described his response to Mr Portillo's speech as unrepeatable on British soil, adding that he agreed with his officials' view that it had been grotesque and deplorable.

He also unnerved Tory Euro-sceptics by predicting that the Maastricht timetable of a single currency by the beginning of 1999 would be achieved, even asserting that Britain would join when the majority of other EU countries decided to do so.

Old stager Heseltine comes out with a new battle cry

Rebecca Smithers

MICHAEL HESELTINE gave a rousing speech designed to assert his new authority as Deputy Prime Minister. With oratory which drew rapturous applause, Mr Heseltine made it clear to anyone doubting the purpose of his new job that it is to help the Prime Minister win the next election.

Mr Heseltine used second world war images to rally the party, urging members to reject Dunkirk-style "defeatism" about the coming general election, and concentrate instead on the "turning point" — Alamein. And he outshone party chairman Brian Mawhinney, whose speech failed to enthuse arriving delegates to the same degree, with a piece of pure pantomime.

He reminded delegates that 20 years previously he had warned that Labour was a one-legged army limping from the wreckage of its policies. Adopting the tone of a regimental sergeant major, Mr Heseltine categorised Labour's apparent shift to the right by barking out: "About turn". With a bemused Mr Major looking on, he then hopped across the stage on one leg, shouting: "Left, left, left" then saying "that didn't work . . . Right, right, right".

Looking back to the last war, Mr Heseltine recalled Dunkirk and a defeated army. "Some talk of a general election in such terms. I reject such defeatism. Remember instead — Alamein. The turning point. This conference is such a turning point."

Mr Heseltine said the Tories had turned Britain into "a country bursting with energy".

But in what was seized upon as a veiled attack on Michael Portillo's anti-Brussels rhetoric, he added: "You can wrap yourself in any flag of any colour and you can mouth whatever patriotic rhetoric the PR merchants can devise . . . but unless you hammer home the message that our companies must give the customers what they want . . . then politicians are guilty of a great deceit, a giant fraud, the ultimate betrayal of Britain."

CAN MR PORTILLO COUNT ON YOUR VOTE IN THE NEXT ELECTION?

Dream that died in Washington

BLACK pride returned to Washington on Monday in the shape of the Million Man March. The contrast between the last time such civil rights numbers assembled and now could not be greater. Three decades ago the great black leader, Martin Luther King, set out his integrationist dream. He warned his people "not to thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred". Instead, he spelled out his dream of black and white sitting down together at the table of brotherhood. Three decades on, there is a new messenger. A messenger of hate and bitterness. Louis Farrakhan, leader of the tiny Nation of Islam sect, who inspired and organised this week's march, is a racist, sexist separatist. Jews are "bloodsuckers", murder comes easy to whites, and black women were told to stay at home on Monday, pray and watch the childen. You can't fight racism with racism — yet most mainstream black groups endorsed Farrakhan's march, even though few embrace his separatist message. What happened to Martin Luther King's dream?

The reaction to the O J Simpson verdict demonstrates the chasm between America's two communities: 70 per cent of whites believing the football star guilty, 80 per cent of the black community judging him innocent. Statistics starkly illustrate the gulf which still has to be bridged. Compared with their white contemporaries, black people are twice as likely to be unemployed, three times as likely to be on welfare, four times as likely to be in prison, six times as likely to be murdered. There are more young black people in prison than in college. A report released last week showed one in three black males in their 20s was either in prison, on probation or on parole. Black America is gripped by fratricidal conflict. Is it any wonder that there is disilluslon with the dream? What better recruiting sergeants could Farrakhan have than the Supreme Court with its erosion of affirmative action and the new Republican "contract" with its squeeze on subsidies to the ghettoes.

Yet this ignores the bridges which have already been built. Black America has been transformed since King spoke. Segregation has ended. A black middle class has emerged. Almost one third of the 35 million black Americans are "comfortably off". Almost 50 per cent of black school-leavers go to college, only 10 per cent fewer than their white contemporaries. There are black role models in all key positions. There's even a black military chief being wooed as a presidential candidate. And yet huge divisions remain. The black middle class feels culturally excluded while the poor are totally alientated. Farrakhan's uncompromising message to the poor is embraced by nearly all: a call for more black self-reliance, self-help, self-discipline. But why leave it to a racist to say this? Even Jesse Jackson, a King protégé, was reluctant to say who he now embraced: King or Farrakhan. Yet Farrakhan lacks a programme. Militancy alone will not transform American society. Time to separate the messenger from the message.

Strike exposes Chirac's problem

IT WAS BLACK Tuesday in France last week but for whom? As young Parisians roller-skated to work while older ones stayed at home, the public might have been expected to complain at being inconvenienced so drastically by a public sector which many believe to be not too badly off. Yet most French people support the strike, which is about much more than complex calculations on whether public sector pay will increase next year. The pressure on the franc increased less in anticipation of the disruption than because of the prospect that Prime Minister Alain Juppé might be brought down by a squalid housing scandal. More broadly, this crisis is a verdict on his unconvincing political performance, which in turn reflects the contradictory pledges with which Jacques Chirac bluffed his way to presidential power.

Brandishing the nuclear test card since then has failed to create the desired patriotic surge. The French ambassador in New Zealand may claim it is "not a bomb": by any name, it has been a foreign policy disaster. Mr Chirac looks increasingly like a lightweight performer. And all this takes place against a European backcloth where the familiar contours of approaching monetary unity begin to resemble a mirage.

When Mr Chirac was trying to outbid his Socialist opponent during the election, he argued that a full pay packet was not the enemy of jobs. The forced departure in August of the monetarist finance minister Alain Madelin seemed to rule out an assault on the public sector. Instead, it may have increased the pressure on Mr Juppé to bow to financial orthodoxy and declare a pay freeze.

The government claims that pay will actually rise by 3.2 per cent. This is made up by adding the follow-through effect of a small rise for this year (from which all 5 million employees benefit) to the averaged-out cost of promotion and seniority increases for a minority. The civil servants admit that they have done better in recent years than the private sector but argue that they are still making up for lost ground. Beyond the disputed figures, the strength of last week's strike illustrates a sense of solidarity which may appear to belong to another age. But a public service which retains its *esprit de corps* is surely preferable to one which has been broken on the wheel.

The argument remains that France must tighten public sector spending to reduce its total deficit to 3 per cent by 1997 in time for European monetary union. Whether or not that particular train will be standing at its expected platform is now in doubt. But the real problem — as Libération put it — arises from the attempt to combine financial and social orthodoxy with creating jobs and helping the disadvantaged. If the traffic lights are set simultaneously at red and green no wonder France is going round in circles.

A con man on the loose

WHICH is the true Michael — the blood-chilling merchant of correction doubling prison sentences inside the hall, or the egregious Home Secretary halving them again in the BBC studio minutes later? Part of what Michael Howard said last week was pure con. Never trust a man who says he wants more honesty. Inside the Blackpool conference hall, the Home Secretary told his ecstatic supporters that it was time to put honesty back into sentencing: five years should mean five years. But outside the hall, he told the BBC — and the millions watching television — that the judges would, of course, have to "take into account the length of sentence served". Or put another way, the judge who sentences an offender to four years now — knowing he will serve only two — should in future only impose a two-year sentence.

So has Mr Howard gone soft? Far from it. In terms of the further turns made to the penal system's thumb-screw his plans would add thousands to the prison population: new extended sentences for burglars and drug dealers; automatic life sentences for a second conviction of a serious sexual or violent offence, plus the end of remission and parole. Worse still, the new mandatory life sentence would put sentencing back into the hands of a politician: the Home Secretary.

Is it a feasible package? No — or not if you are serious about tax cuts. The prison system has already suffered a record rise from 40,000 to 52,000 in less than three years. Trying to squeeze in an extra 4,000 will make the system go bust. Mr Howard's package won him a predictable ovation inside the hall, but earned him a well deserved rebuke from the Lord Chief Justice. Never in living memory has a Home Secretary been slapped down so quickly by the most senior judge. Lord Taylor rightly reminded the politician that detection, not the length of sentence, remains the main deterrent to crime.

So what was Mr Howard up to? First he had to so slake the thirst of his audience that they would forget he had said nothing about compulsory ID cards. In this personal political survival act he succeeded. Then there was the wider political battle: how to produce such an oppressive penal package that even New Labour is forced to oppose it. In this aim, everyone must hope he succeeds. There should be no equivocation from Labour even though Mr Howard's motive could not be plainer: pinning a "soft on crime" label on Labour in the run-up to the general election. Labour should hold its nerve.

Last week's Gallup poll shows Labour still way ahead. The public will not be fooled — this is not a serious policy package but a blatant political ploy.

Tongue tied to an English oral tradition

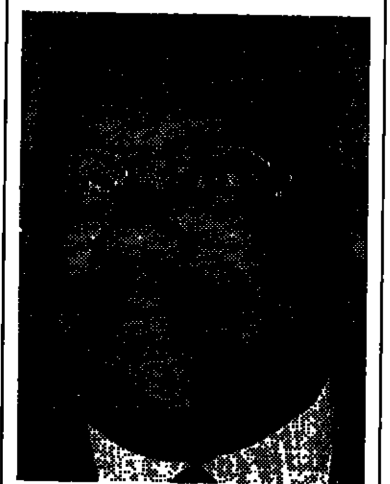
Natasha Walter

THE Education Secretary, Gillian Shephard, last week announced her desire to preserve another national asset. Not grant-maintained schools, but the English language. Her new campaign for better English, chaired by the TV newsreader Trevor McDonald, with those other paragons of linguistic rectitude, Gyles Brandreth MP and the former newspaper editor, Sir David English, will boost a new school qualification in spoken English.

British oral culture is riddled with strange problems. As John Sutton, general secretary of the Secondary Heads' Association, said: "One of the things I have noticed in other English-speaking countries is a greater degree of confidence among young people about just standing up and speaking."

It is notable that Trevor McDonald learnt his own fluent, rather formal speech in the West Indies. And, however much we mock their "Have a nice day" motifs, we are often reminded that Americans tend to speak with much more fluency and control than the British. Our politicians cannot work a crowd to tears like Jesse Jackson; our chat-show hosts cannot weave seductive parodies of intimacy like Oprah Winfrey.

The difference runs beyond public speaking. The ability to go vividly and gracefully with the chattering flow is a *sine qua non* of American social life; compare this with the cool jitters of south-east Britain. Education in Britain is still predicated on the flow of speech from teacher to student, a culture that resists equal, eager communication. When I moved from a British university to an American one, the difference was striking.



Trevor McDonald . . . learnt his fluent speech in the West Indies

At first the British students were uncomfortable in a situation where everyone spoke, and everyone was expected to speak. And then we were seduced by the informal oral culture — being able to start without knowing how you would finish, to apologise nonchalantly when you were wrong, and to enjoy the pleasures of collective rather than private discovery.

In other words, it will take a lot more than a campaign for better English to change our speaking culture. It would require the breaking down of our class system, the shaking up of our education system, and a whole cultural shift towards a can-do, or can-say, mentality.

But there are inimitable strengths in British speech. Mrs Shephard's campaign will never, thank God, be able to dent its most beloved and difficult patterns. Those patterns range all the way from the surreal roundabouts of Pinter-speak, a pattern heard every day on London buses; to the new political rhetoric that never misses its tripartite beat; to all the varied linguistic landscapes immortalised in the literature of James Kelman or Adam Thorpe or Victor Headley.

Against all that life and constant movement we certainly don't need any strengthening of the artificial straitjacket of BBC English, the self-conscious lingua franca of the south-east middle class.

But even if we aren't going to hold it up as a kind of ideal, we have to recognise the power that standard English can confer. After all, delightful as we find our mix of spoken forms in theory, in practice the media, law, politics and business are dominated by people who have mastered one kind of speech pattern.

ALL THE best schools already recognise the importance of the spoken as well as the written word in opening doors. At one careers conference I visited in a school in Tower Hamlets, most of whose pupils wouldn't speak English at home, the students performed job-interview role-plays. Their tussles over how to communicate most effectively in such alien theatres were illuminating. They reminded the other participants how artificial many of our common linguistic gestures are.

We have taken them so much for granted that we give them moral names like "straightforward" or "polite". But however artificial they are, we need to realise how important it is that children are given a chance to learn them — without shrugging off other modes of communication.

The most dismissive comments about such an idea often come from the higher echelons of education. The headmaster of Harrow School said: "Instinctively I do not like this idea. It assumes standardised English and I'm a great believer in the rich variety of English language."

The headmaster of Westminster School, similarly, said: "It would be very difficult to produce objective views on what standardised English should be." Perhaps they can afford to be so dismissive because what their pupils are learning in the playground and at home doesn't need to be defined or rewarded.

As the newsreader, the MP and the newspaperman now go off and chat about just how they should improve spoken English, they should not let the outdated ideal of a standardised language control their dialogue, although it will figure in it.

Any qualification can be designed to take account of local diversity, to respond to the communities that students come from, the aims they have, the norms they want. It need not be about conforming to an abstract ideal of correct speech, but can reward articulacy in any accent.

Iraq Buying Arms Covertly, U.N. Told

R. Jeffrey Smith

THE IRAQI government has used a covert network of purchasing agents and dummy companies to buy millions of dollars worth of sensitive missile parts from firms in Europe and Russia, in direct violation of the global trade embargo imposed by the United Nations, U.S. and U.N. officials said last week.

The officials depicted the Iraqi purchases as a surprising reprise of the country's largely successful effort before the 1991 Persian Gulf War to buy key components for its missiles and other weapons of mass destruction from the West, an effort that Washington and its allies say they mistakenly believed they had stopped when the war ended.

They said that Iraq evidently has not used the equipment, which it acquired over the last several years, to make any Scud medium-range missiles prohibited by the United Nations. It instead has sought to stockpile the items for use at a later time and to conceal them from the U.N. weapons inspectors charged with ensuring that Iraq cannot rebuild its arsenal of such missiles.

The officials said the equipment Iraq has obtained includes key pieces of advanced missile guidance systems, such as accelerometers and gyroscopes, a variety of specialty metals, a set of special machine tools, and a high-tech furnace that can be used to fabricate missile engine parts. The furnace, valued at more than $1 million, was obtained from France.

A report issued last week by Swedish Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq, said the country had also secretly placed orders for other missile-related "technologies, supplies, and material" and that the Iraqi government had lied by claiming items it purchased overseas were produced indigenously.

"It is clear that Iraq has a very advanced procurement system" that operates through a variety of front companies and has "very murky, devious payment methods," Ekeus told reporters last week after briefing members of the U.N. Security Council on the commission's recent activities in Iraq.

The U.N. group has calculated that the missile-related orders reflect Iraq's willingness to spend tens of millions of dollars to rebuild a key facet of its prewar military capability, even though the country's leaders claim it is financially strapped. "It shows that Iraq is essentially unrepentant, that they want to rebuild as quickly as possible," a senior U.S. official said.

Iraq has acknowledged making some of the purchases in support of a major missile research laboratory outside Baghdad known as Ibn al-Haytham, and at least two related facilities elsewhere, according to U.N. officials. But it has contended that equipment was meant only to be used for producing a short-range missile, which was not prohibited by the United Nations at the end of the war.

The officials said the missile parts could be used for either short- or medium-range missiles. They also noted that U.N. Security Council resolutions bar any imports by Iraq of items other than foodstuffs, medicines or those not related to humanitarian purposes. Sales to Iraq of industrial equipment or technology especially intended for military use is strictly prohibited, according to German Ambassador to the U.N., Antonius Eitel, who chairs the U.N. committee that implements trade sanctions against Iraq.

Ekeus declined to tell reporters which countries the equipment came from, citing the commission's continuing effort to track down the companies involved to find out what else they might have sold. But another official said "you could name most of the European countries" as suppliers, including Germany, France and Ukraine.

The senior U.S. official expressed particular concern over recent, missile-related sales to Iraq from Russia. "They either are letting things through [because of lax export controls] or their government is encouraging it," the official said, adding that Russia's motive for paying little heed to such exports is apparently its intense "desire to get back into an arms supplier relationship" with Iraq.

The official was referring to Russia's involvement before the Persian Gulf War — along with France — as one of the major arms suppliers to Iraq. Those two countries have recently been the principal backers of lifting the trade sanctions soon.



Our man . . . Supporters of Saddam Hussein attend a rally last weekend before a referendum re-affirmed his presidency PHOTO JASSIM MUHAMMED

Iraq denied buying missile parts from abroad for several years, but later admitted making a few foreign purchases when U.N. inspectors confronted its officials with incriminating records of the transactions that were obtained through other governments, an official said. It "admitted much more" after a senior Iraqi weapons official, Hussein Kamel Hassan Majeed, defected to Jordan in August and met with Ekeus, the official said.

While Europeans have played the largest role in the illicit missile trade, some Iraqi purchases of military-related equipment in recent years have also involved U.S. citizens. A shipment from China to Iraq of ammonium perchlorate, an explosive chemical that can be used to make rocket fuel, was arranged by a businessman in Long Island, N.Y., in 1993, but the chemical was confiscated before reaching its destination, according to U.S. officials.

Three persons were arrested in Dallas and Houston in August on charges of conspiring to export detectors for deadly chemical agents to Iraq, and last April, a businessman in Boston was arrested for trying to sell to Iraq shelters meant to protect soldiers against chemical, biological or nuclear attacks.

The U.S. Customs Service has underway roughly 35 investigations of violations of the Iraqi trade sanctions, including around 10 that involve illicit sales of military-related items, according to Connie Fenchel, head of the Strategic Investigations Office for the service.

"The Iraqis are in fact continuing, if not enhancing, their efforts to procure missile technology and every other type of technology, in fact anything that's currently embargoed," Fenchel said. "My observation is that they are attempting to procure through every possible means whatever they can in every country they can. We have seen a definite increase in the past couple of years."

Pentagon Cancels Laser Gun

Bradley Graham

THE Pentagon's civilian leaders have ordered the Army to cancel production of a laser weapon that was to be mounted atop M-16 rifles, the first casualty of a new Defense Department policy banning use of lasers specifically designed to blind foes.

Army officials had defended the new laser weapon as a high-tech, low-mess way of disrupting enemy night-vision goggles, binoculars and other optical devices on the battlefield. They denied the weapon was intended to cause permanent blindness, although acknowledged it could do so at ranges up to 3,000ft.

The Army had planned to spend $17 million over the next two years buying 75 of the devices for testing and training.

But after reviewing the program last month, senior Pentagon civilians concluded the weapon, known as the Laser Countermeasure System, had little real usefulness and was not in keeping with the spirit of the new policy.

No longer able to justify the weapon on conceptual or policy grounds, Deputy Secretary John White instructed Army Secretary Togo D. West Jr. in a memo dated October 5 to terminate the program "promptly."

In a memo to White dated the same day, Gen. Ronald H. Griffith, the Army's vice chief of staff, agreed to end the program but continued to insist the weapon was "fully consistent" with the new Pentagon policy.

Cancellation of the Army program comes as a United Nations conference on conventional weapons, meeting in Vienna, is considering a draft protocol modeled along the lines of the new Pentagon policy.

Some governments had favored a wider ban that would have outlawed use of any laser weapon to blind, not just lasers designed for that purpose. But U.S. officials worried that acceding to such a broad international prohibition would have inhibited use of laser weapons for such legitimate purposes as target designation and range-finding, and also might have risked exposing U.S. soldiers to charges of war crimes in event of incidental or emergency use of lasers to blind.

As Eagles Soar, a Battle Looms

Gary Lee

MOLLIE BEATTIE left Washington after breakfast one morning last week to search for bald eagles. By midday, less than 25 miles from the Capitol, she had spotted at least a dozen of the majestic birds.

Beattie, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, made the trip to illustrate the dramatic comeback of bald eagles nationwide. Numbering in the tens of thousands in the 1800s, the eagle population dwindled to 417 nesting pairs in the 1960s, mostly because of pesticide poisoning and loss of habitat.

In the last two decades, however, their numbers have climbed dramatically. Earlier this year, an FWS eagle census counted 4,500 pairs in the Lower 48 states. As a result, the FWS upgraded the eagle's status from endangered to threatened, a less restrictive category, in July.

Wildlife biologists believe the major reason for the increase was the Environmental Protection Agency's 1972 ban on DDT, a widely used pesticide that was poisoning eagles and other wildlife.

But the 1973 Endangered Species Act, now being targeted for revision by some Republican members of Congress, also played a big role in the eagle's recovery, said Michael Bean, an expert on endangered species with the Environmental Defense Fund. The law imposed stiff penalties on poaching, provided protection for nesting areas and instituted captive breeding programs.

The ESA has allowed federal officials to work closely with private landowners who have nests on their land in order to preserve wildlife habitat, an FWS official said. "This is an example of what an all-out effort can do to keep an endangered species from becoming extinct," said Beattie.

Conservationists say such efforts are imperiled by a GOP-led congressional bid to scale back federal regulations designed to protect threatened wildlife and plant populations.

Last week, the House Resources Committee passed, 27 to 17, legislation that would make protection of endangered species on private lands voluntary, negate a recent Supreme Court ruling that prohibits destruction of the habitat of endangered species and complicate the process of adding new species to the list.

Environmentalists attacked the bill as a virtual repeal of the ESA and vowed to fight it. If the proposal had been passed instead of the ESA, the bald eagle would probably not be around today, said Rodger Schlickeisen, president of Defenders of Wildlife. More than 130 lawmakers have circulated a letter criticizing the committee's proposal as too extreme.

The increase in the bald eagle population has been particularly dramatic in the Washington area, which boasts the third largest concentration of the birds in the country after Florida and Wisconsin, said Craig Koppe, an FWS eagle specialist.

At the Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge, where Beattie conducted her survey, the number of eagles has almost tripled in 12 years. This year officials have counted 30 eagles in the area, compared with 11 spotted there in 1983.

Black Males Stand Together To Reverse Erosion of Hope

Nathan McCall reflects on the significance of this week's Million Man March in Washington DC

WHEN I first heard of the Million Man March, my response was automatic: I telephoned my son, who's in college nearly 200 miles away and commanded him to come to the event.

Then I phoned the mothers of my 15-year-old nephew and my 16-year-old cousin — both high school males who also live some distance from Washington — to arrange for them to attend the historic march.

In the weeks leading up to Monday's demonstration on the Mall, my own phone did not stopped ringing

Black men I know from throughout the country have called, excited, hyped, pledging to bring sons, colleagues and friends and making bids for a place to stay.

The enthusiasm about the rally generated a new, refreshing sense of camaraderie among black men and rekindled an activist spirit that's been dormant for years. I think brothers responded to the call to march because they instinctively knew we desperately needed this event to boost our morale.

In a very real way, the Million Man March represented a kind of therapy for black men. It offered a lot of things that we urgently need — a chance to come together and confront our shortcomings and celebrate our strengths; an opportunity for us to take stock of our current plight and to plot a better future course; and, on a very basic level, a healthy way for black men to get a little bit of this tension off our chests.

For the past six months or so, I've felt that tension within myself. At times it's so acute it actually feels physical, like a burning pressure building inside. I sense it in many other brothers, too. And given the irrational racial climate in this country today, I see strong potential for black men's collective tensions to explode: That is the last thing we need.

The strain inside of us comes from interrelated forces that are operating within and outside African-American communities nationwide; it's a confluence of social, economic and political powers that seem to be working in unison to bring us down.

And we, in our hearts, know that we share some responsibility for this downward spiral. I'm both angry and frightened to see how our self-hatred moves us to destroy ourselves. For the past decade, I've stood by, literally helpless and in shock, watching the steady erosion of hope everywhere, particularly among black men.

And none of those pressures shows any signs of letting up. I follow news accounts of the constantly high unemployment, poverty and death rates. I read the reports showing that black men are always in short supply in college enrollment, management jobs, heads of households — virtually every positive role you can imagine.

Yet they're routinely overrepresented in practically every negative quality-of-life measurement that the numbers-crunchers produce, from high school drop-out rates to joblessness to crime.

But the depression that many black men feel is not just confined to the so-called underclass. I see plenty of hardworking, law-abiding middle class and professional blacks — men who play meticulously by the white man's rules — frustrated and enraged because they see those rules manipulated to white advantage.

Black men's tension is compounded when we see how many, but by no means all, white Americans respond with apathy and outright hostility to our distress. The fashionable formula offered by white demagogues for addressing black men's monumental woes — three-strikes-and-you're-out, mandatory sentencing, and the abolition of parole — is especially vicious and destructive.

As an African American who's gone the prison route, these sinister measures make me so furious sometimes that my vision gets blurred. They make me want to lash out at whites in the basest way.

Just the other day, I almost lost my cool while standing in an airport line. When an attendant called for passengers to step forward, I moved ahead and a white man standing in front of me loudly protested, shouting, "There's only room for one at a time."

His reaction may not have been racially motivated but in that moment I assumed it was. Looking into his indignant eyes, I saw a symbol of everything about white America that vexes me: arrogance, ignorance and selfishness mixed with the ugly assumption that I was just another black man out to get a preferential break.

I took off my sunglasses and glared at him, daring him to say another word. I'm ashamed now to admit that I was ready to go to war. It showed me just how racially on edge I am.

I certainly don't want to hate that white man or blame all whites for all the problems African Americans face. But I do want them to examine their casual arrogance and understand that they do share responsibility for the sorry state of this country now.

THERE are many oppressed, defeated black men who have far more valid reasons than me to lose their cool. That's why I know that, despite the controversies swirling around the Million Man March, we all needed to be there.

Above all else, the focus of the march was meant to be introspective, peaceful, spiritual. Anyone who even remotely understood that couldn't possibly oppose it. A sober, reflective gathering of black men has the potential to benefit everyone — including whites.

America needs to understand that we needed this march because we have too few brushes with self-generated success. We needed to see and feel the potential of thousands of black men gathered in one place for a righteous cause. And whites needed to see this, too.

"We want to show the world that we're not the hoodlums that they think we are," said C. Stephen Jones, director of the Metropolitan Ecumenical Ministry, which was coordinating march efforts in Newark, N.J. and surrounding black communities. "This is not just about what white folks are doing to us, but also what we're doing to ourselves."

This march has been especially important for young black males. Many of them are genuinely confused about what it means to be a man. They need to have a male-bonding experience that counteracts popular macho notions about the value of being "hard" and aloof.

Those people most troubled by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan's leadership role in the rally are losing sight of one of its chief stated goals: atonement. As black men, we're being asked to make amends for the wrongs we've done.

Perhaps Farrakhan's critics should be encouraged that he proposed the idea; maybe it's a signal that he, too, plans to atone for the wrong he's done.

I suspect that, for some white Americans, complaints about Farrakhan are a smoke screen to conceal their blanket contempt for any black man who attempts to lift us up.

White America may now pledge allegiance to the memory of Martin Luther King but black America has not forgotten that King, who preached love, peace and every other noble virtue that we claim to embrace, was intensely disliked and opposed by many whites when he was alive.

His plan for a march on Washington 32 years ago was also described as divisive, unnecessary, potentially violent.

I have even less patience with the so-called black church and political leaders nationwide who have criticized the Million Man March. With all that black men have been going through in recent years, there's been no broad-scale effort — symbolic or otherwise — by national black politicians and clergy to inspire us.

If there were more black leaders out there with courage and imagination, we'd have done something like this long ago.

Everywhere I've gone in recent months, from barber shops in Maryland to college campuses in Kentucky, the irrelevance of this traditional leadership has been clear. Black men — the regular brothers whose voices are seldom captured on TV or in print — said they did not need to consult so-called black leaders to determine whether or not to attend the march.

There is one group that I sympathize with in all this: black women. I think it was a mistake not to include sisters in the march. It's true that if black men atone for their wrongs, black women stand to benefit. But they, too, needed to be there for this therapy — they're hurting as much as anyone.

I'm well aware that the media will gauge the success of the march by its turnout. For me, the numbers are irrelevant. The march has already succeeded because the seeds have been planted nationwide for black men to stand up and be strong again.

Nathan McCall is on leave from the Washington Post. His autobiography, Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man In America, was published by Random House.



Louis Farrakhan: The Nation of Islam leader portrays African-Americans as an occupied people in an alien land

How a Powell Presidency Would Heal Racial Wounds

OPINION
Charles Krauthammer

RECENTLY, I argued that Colin Powell, as president, would spell disaster for the Republican revolution: As a self-declared Rockefeller Republican and a man of widespread popularity and moral stature, Powell would be able to halt the Republican assault on the New Deal-Great Society welfare state as no one else could.

Yet committed as I am to the success of the conservative revolution, I would seriously consider voting for Powell for president. I would do so without any illusions about what damage a Powell presidency would do to the Republican project of dismantling the welfare state, a project I believe essential to restoring the vigor of civil society and of government itself.

What, for a person of my ideological ilk, could justify such a sacrifice? What issue could possibly trump the need for restructuring a ruinously dysfunctional national government?

Only one: Race.

In an ironic and tragic turn of the civil rights revolution, there is today a powerful movement within the black community away from Martin Luther King's vision of integration toward a new kind of separatism, self-imposed and adversarial. Its most extreme advocate is, of course, Louis Farrakhan who portrays African-Americans as an occupied people in an alien land.

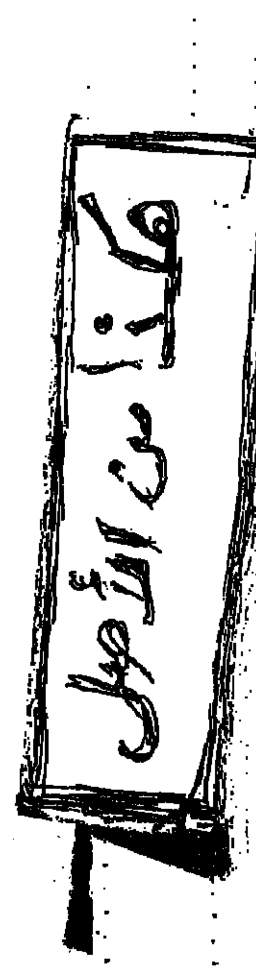
His message has a resonance not confined to the political extremes of the black community. Monday saw the realization of Farrakhan's pet project, his Million Man March on Washington. The fact that such mainstream icons of the black community as the Congressional Black Caucus, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Jesse Jackson endorsed Farrakhan's march shows the extent to which he and his separatist vision have gained legitimacy among African-Americans.

Against this tragic turn toward black separatism comes Colin Powell, a man who calls his autobiography not a personal journey, not an African-American journey, but "An American Journey"; whose self-identity is one of soldier, patriot and, above all, American; who, while declaring himself to be proudly American, at the same time declares himself not just incidentally black but proudly black.

Powell proudly identifies with the integrationist vision. His very history personifies it. For such a man to win the presidency would have a transforming effect on Americans' view of racial possibilities. Among African-Americans it would present, by stunning counterexample, the single greatest challenge since King to the voices of separation and alienation.

That is why even conservatives like me would have to give a Powell candidacy serious consideration. We have to seriously consider which is the more urgent threat to the American future: the depredations of a highly destructive welfare state or corrosive racial division.

It is not a simple choice. We did not need the Simpson trial to remind us (this column, in fact, was written before the trial had even finished) that racial divisions in America are widening. This is a society in which one cannot today spit without it becoming a race issue. In such a society, even conservatives need to consider whether a Powell presidency, for all its regressiveness regarding radical reform of the welfare state, might not be best for the country.



Mental Aftershocks Deadly to Kobe Quake Victims

Mary Jordan in Kobe, Japan

MASAKO RENPO drew the bath where she would die. The quiet wife who liked to read Tolstoy undressed alone and left no note. She had started the day like all others since the great earthquake in January took her home and her way of life: She said nothing. Then, when her husband went out, she sat down in a tiny plastic bathtub, slit her left wrist and died in a pool of her own blood.

"We never talked about the earthquake," her husband, Kunihiro Fujiwara, said after the funeral earlier this month. "The only thing she ever said was, 'I want to go home. I want to go home.'" Fujiwara said his wife of 40 years gave him no warning that she would be the next in a string of suicides among survivors of last January's devastating earthquake in Kobe. Police reports count her as the 22nd suicide, but nurses and psychologists say the real number is far higher and surpasses the average suicide rate.

Two days before her death, Renpo and her husband walked to a noodle shop for lunch. Forty years earlier they had met and fallen in love in a similar shop. But that outing was rare. Mostly she sat inside on a beige flowered cushion in her strange new home, which is not much bigger than a single room in an American house.

Tens of thousands of Japanese live in 50,000 other identical temporary housing units, all in perfect rows, scattered in and around Kobe. Many of these people remain isolated and depressed, but unable or unwilling to speak of their loss.

Nearly nine months after the devastating earthquake burned and demolished huge sections of this pretty, hilly port known for its shoes and chocolates, Kobe is flourishing again. Construction workers have put back together supermarkets, offices, hotels. The whir of cranes, the tumble of concrete mixers and the sight of thousands of construction workers rebuilding Shinto shrines and family homes give the city a vibrant, even youthful feel. The transformation has been so quick that in some places there is scarcely a trace of the tragedy that caused 6,024 deaths.

But psychologists and social workers say the single-minded spirit that has brought Kobe back from the ashes has come at a price. Alcoholism has risen sharply; mental illness, especially depression, is common; and suicides continue. In the months following the earthquake, despondent survivors have jumped in front of trains and down an elevator shaft, walked into the sea and hanged themselves. Ritsuko Ogami calls it Kobe's "second agony."

Ogami, a social worker specializing in psychology who has talked to hundreds of victims, said delayed despair is now enveloping many people, in part because by culture and upbringing the Japanese are taught to put up a strong, silent front.

"Japanese usually don't release their feelings. They bury them in their mind, until they build up like layers," she said.

Ogami spends her days visiting people in temporary housing, and she has learned that many people, like Renpo, have never spoken about January 17, the day their lives completely changed. "Japanese emphasize the importance of the group," she said. "They notice everyone else's suffering — all eyes are to be on the group. They think it is not proper to talk about their own agony."

This group spirit won worldwide fascination in the immediate aftermath of the quake. Politely and orderly, more than 250,000 people left homeless by the tremor waited patiently in line for water and food. The incidence of looting and violence was astonishingly low.

"The fact that there was no panic after the earthquake is the good part of this mentality," Ogami said. "The mental problems we are seeing now are the bad part."

Hisao Nakai, chairman of the department of psychiatry and neurology at Kobe University School of Medicine, said that as a whole, "Japanese don't pay enough attention to mental health," but he thought that was changing.

Nakai pointed out that people of other nationalities also suppress their sorrow. He referred to James Joyce's Finnegans Wake, in which the Irish laugh to divert attention from death.

Many in Kobe said they do not chat with their new neighbors in the temporary housing, even though they share the loss of family and friends, jobs and belongings. They had spent a lifetime knowing those who lived beside them in their old homes; friendship is not earned hastily in Japan.



Living hell . . . taught from an early age to keep their feelings hidden, many survivors of the Kobe disaster are suffering in silence which, in turn, has led some to commit suicide PHOTO: KATSUMI KASAHARA

Ogami, the social worker, said she has made progress getting some people to face their problems. But for many, that means confronting a gloomy and difficult future.

Sumayo Hamamoto, 88, frets about where she is going to live when the time comes to leave her government housing. She paid only $200 a month in her tiny, old apartment, which collapsed like cardboard in the earthquake, and new apartments cost $1,000 or more.

HIDEKO Okamoto, who also lives in temporary housing, wishes she could get her daughter, Naomi, to talk more to her. "Naomi still hears the cries of a neighbor who burned before her eyes" in the debris of the quake, Okamoto said. Naomi and others tried to pry the woman loose, but they had to back away when the fire became too intense. Since then Naomi, 41, has not had a happy day and has stopped working, her mother said.

The house where Masako Renpo killed herself is less than two miles from her home destroyed in the quake. But she would talk to none of her new neighbors. Renpo, 79, who used her maiden name, never spoke to anyone of the terror she felt when the earth started moving while she slept. A tall bookcase slammed on top of her futon, glancing against her body. She never drank, but sometimes bummed a cigarette, her husband said. She was a kind person, he said, "who didn't tell jokes but laughed at mine."

Her husband urged her to get out of the house more, but she resisted. People who lived 10 feet away had never heard of her. They had not even known that someone had just killed herself in their midst.

Kobe authorities say this is not unusual. Police said there have been 15 "isolated deaths" in the earthquake victims' housing, when someone died alone, apparently of natural causes, and was not discovered for days, or weeks.

Only 10 people came to Renpo's funeral. Before the service at her tiny house, the funeral guests, by custom, knelt at a small Buddhist altar where her picture rested, draped in black ribbons. In front of the photo, taken some time ago when her hair was still black and her face less worn, her ashes sat in an urn. Family and friends placed an apple, a pear, crackers and a tiny porcelain cup of rice, in a symbolic offering of food to the dead. Her gold-rimmed glasses lay folded shut.

Fujiwara, rail-thin and steadily puffing cigarettes as he stared numbly at the altar in his living room, said that at first a carpenter had said their old home would be rebuilt by last June, but one delay followed another. On the day she took a razor to her wrist, Fujiwara had again implored the carpenter to hurry, but "he said it would be ready in December."

"December, December," the frail old man repeated. "Too late. Too late."

Special correspondent Shigehiko Togo contributed to this report.

U.S. Aims to Stay Out of Quebec Dispute

Charles Trueheart in Toronto

THE UNITED STATES is trying to steer clear of the acrimonious referendum campaign on Quebec's proposed secession from Canada. But that has not kept either side from playing the American card to its own advantage, drawing the United States willy-nilly into the fray.

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's strategy to beat back the separatist option in the October 30 provincial vote has relied heavily on warnings that an independent Quebec would be cast adrift from Canada's vital economic relationship with the United States and its citizens punished in the process. Separatists scoff at the suggestion of economic quarantine. Both sides brandish reports and produce experts, often American ones, to bolster their conflicting claims.

Pro-unity forces recently seized on separatist assurances to voters that a sovereign Quebec would become a fourth member of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Canadian Finance Minister Paul Martin, using particularly blunt language, last month called the assumption "dangerously and fatally flawed" and laid out the obstacle course Quebec would have to hurdle to enjoy the advantages it would throw away by separating from Canada.

If separatists win enough votes October 30 to force negotiations on a new union between Canada and Quebec, Martin said, "Right from the beginning the Americans would be part of the equation. . . . The United States would jump at this opportunity to reopen many of the key protections Canada fought hard to secure for itself as well as for Quebec."

Canada's ambassador in Washington, Raymond Chrétien, echoed the theme in a recent speech he delivered in Quebec, arguing that the current U.S. Congress is decidedly inhospitable to the special arrangements Canada enjoys under NAFTA.

These attacks on the separatist message may have hit home in the province of 7 million mostly French-speaking Quebecers, although no issue has dominated the campaign. Preoccupied by their economic security and the painful costs of debt and deficit reduction, Quebecers seem unmotivated to usher in a new era of French-speaking nation-building, to say nothing of a protracted battle to dissolve their imperfect but familiar marriage to Canada. Only one poll gives the separatist option more than 40 percent of the vote.

Separatists have their own American angles. They seldom fail to point out that Quebec provided the political leadership in Canada that made the original 1989 U.S.-Canadian trade agreement possible. French-speaking Quebecers regard themselves, with reason, as more pro-American than English Canadians, and Americans as their real fellow free-marketeers.

Those cultural and economic ties between Quebecers and Americans, argue separatists and some analysts, will trancend whatever unpleasantness might ensue from a secessionist victory, and buying and selling will resume.

The United States was drawn modestly into the debate earlier this year, after Quebec separatist leaders made what Washington considered one too many claims to voters that membership in NAFTA would be all but automatic, and sometimes hinting that U.S. officials had whispered as much to them.

The U.S. ambassador in Ottawa, James Blanchard, made news by saying that Quebec's accession to NAFTA would be a dicey and difficult prospect. He repeated the warning last week in Montreal, with the referendum campaign in full swing.

"Every time he speaks he reminds them it won't be an easy game," said Laval University historian Louis Balthazar, "and that's an argument for the 'no' side" — those opposing separation. Balthazar said he thought Blanchard was taking "a slightly more interventionist approach than his predecessors."

Staying out of the Quebec bramble has been the keystone of U.S. policy since the Ford administration, when the separatist Parti Québécois first took control of Quebec's provincial government and began planning the first, losing, referendum on "sovereignty-association" in 1980.

The careful formulation dusted off by U.S. presidents and press secretaries ever since has come to be known as the "mantra." The United States enjoys excellent relations with a strong and united Canada, the mantra says, but Canada's political future is for Canadians to decide.

Whose American Dilemma?

David Nicholson

THE END OF RACISM
Principles for a Multicultural Society
By Dinesh D'Souza
The Free Press. 724pp. $30

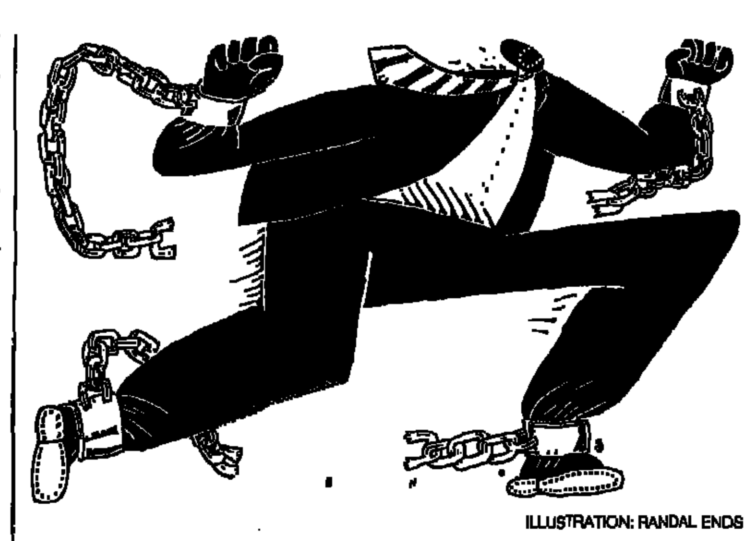


ILLUSTRATION: RANDAL ENDS

THIS IS a maddening book, in places unspeakably vile, littered with half-truths and questionable assumptions, characterized by research aimed not at discovering what is so, but at confirming what the author already believes. Certainly there are, throughout, insights and assessments worth heeding. Ultimately, however, Dinesh D'Souza's The End Of Racism is most valuable as one more indication of a sea change already underway in attitudes towards race and civil rights in America.

The answer to the question implicit in the title — how will we put an end to racism? — can be found in the last chapter. After more than 500 pages of windup, pages in which he traces the origins of racism, explores world and American slavery, Illiberal Education author D'Souza finally gets to the point. "It will be blacks themselves," he writes, "who will finally discredit racism, solve the American dilemma, and become the truest and noblest exemplars of Western civilization."

And how will black Americans do this? By abandoning "idiotic Back-to-Africa schemes and [embracing] mainstream cultural norms, so that they can effectively compete with other groups." If blacks show they can compete they will eradicate "beliefs in black inferiority . . . [by removing] their empirical basis."

In D'Souza's view, racism is not the primary obstacle facing black Americans. Racism, he writes, "no longer has the power to thwart blacks or any other group in achieving their economic, political, and social aspirations." Instead, D'Souza argues, blacks' worst enemies are themselves, and blacks' "main challenge is a civilizational breakdown that stretches across class lines but is especially concentrated in the black underclass."

The route to these conclusions is a long and tortuous one, more than 700 pages of text and notes. While designed to impress, much of this is unnecessary. D'Souza's main points — slavery was not "a racist institution"; liberals and the civil rights establishment are morally bankrupt: blacks can be racist; blacks are their own worst enemies — can be found in his first and last chapters. The End Of Racism, then, is essentially a long magazine article that has consumed more research than was good for it.

To be sure, some of the material in the intervening chapters is intellectually provocative — for example, D'Souza's encapsulation of the Founding Fathers' dilemma: "For them to sanction slavery would be to proclaim the illegitimacy of the American Revolution and the new form of government based on the people's consent; yet for them to outlaw slavery without securing the people's consent would have the same effect."

Elsewhere, however, D'Souza's conclusions are difficult to accept and, often, downright offensive, as when he suggests that "personality types" that developed during slavery — "the playful Sambo, the sullen 'field nigger,' the dependable Mammy, the sly and inscrutable trickster" — are "still recognizable today, or that Africans may be more intelligent than African-Americans because the smart Africans ran away from slave traders.

If that were not enough, he argues that segregation was a form of paternalism, established to offer blacks protection from white racists by minimizing social contact between the races. He minimizes the terrible vicissitudes of slavery, claiming that the breakup of slave families by the sale of parents or children was "not typical." And he seems to believe that because some blacks owned slaves — 3,500 blacks owned about 10,000 black slaves in 1830; or because some slaves were better fed and clothed than white industrial workers in the North, this changes the immoral nature of the peculiar institution.

Finally, D'Souza asks a question that would be laughable if he did not mean it seriously: "If America as a nation owes blacks as a group reparations for slavery, what do blacks as a group owe America for the abolition of slavery?"

D'Souza's offensive conclusions are not limited to the past. For him, America's inner cities are not populated by people, but by barbarians sorely in need of "civilizational renewal." Black culture is characterized by "functional inadequacy." Essentially, however, D'Souza seems to believe that much of black America is in trouble because black Americans aren't intelligent enough. After citing statistics that purport to show a 15-point difference between white and black IQs, D'Souza concludes that the data "suggest that racial preferences are futile and a virtual guarantee of economic inefficiency for private companies and the government. Moreover," he continues, "IQ results suggest the circumstances of poverty and deprivation in which blacks find themselves in America today are not the cause, but the result of low intelligence."

Sometimes, D'Souza is both baffling and offensive, as when he insists that other cultures are more frank in their discussions of race, and offers as proof disparaging remarks made by Japanese government officials blaming America's shortcomings on its black population. And sometimes he is just plain wrong, as when he cites a slave song quoted in Eugene Genovese's Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made, and then, in an end-note, directs the reader to a discussion in Genovese's book of "work avoidance" by slaves. The pages he refers to are actually about intransigent slaves who defied their masters.

IT MAY seem petty to criticize a work of this size for mistakes like that last one. I would argue, however, that the changes D'Souza advocates in our public policy as regards race are of such a magnitude that it is imperative to ask whether we should trust him on the big things when he is so often wrong about the little ones.

And, make no mistake about it, D'Souza would see national policy towards blacks, and other minorities, changed, most fundamentally by doing away with affirmative action and anti-discrimination laws for all employers except government (even though doing so would be a "virtual guarantee of economic inefficiency" because of blacks' low intelligence.) He believes that most employers would not discriminate, because it would be economically unsound to do so, but he has no trouble with those that might: "It is not unjust for an employer to refuse to hire even the most qualified black because the job is the employer's to give and the rejected applicant is no worse off than before applying for the job."

For someone like me, who believes that black Americans can, and should, do more to help themselves, The End Of Racism poses a special problem. All across America, black neighborhoods are in desperate need of renewal. Government can, and should, do more. But the hard truth of the matter is that government can only do so much. In the end, we black Americans will have to reform the schools in our communities. We will have to eliminate violence on our streets by refusing to protect criminals. We will have to demand excellence from our children and accountability from elected officials.

It's true, then, that a great many of D'Souza's recommendations are down-to-earth correctives to bankrupt liberal orthodoxies that condone in black communities destructive behavior whites would never allow in their own. The trouble is that I don't trust D'Souza. By putting the onus solely on blacks to end racism, he completely absolves whites of any responsibility for the American dilemma. Then, too, so much of this book is repugnant, lacking even a wisp of empathy that would show D'Souza has some basic understanding of the complexities and contradictions of American history and the human condition.

Far worse, however, is how often D'Souza's intellectual mentors seem to be the white supremacist Samuel Jared Taylor — who believes that "the alternative to slavery was Negro pandemonium, which is basically what we have right now" — or Michael Levin, the white City College of New York professor who believes in black inferiority and that the criminal behavior of some blacks justifies "rational discrimination" against all.

Thus, while others may hear D'Souza's voice sounding calmly in the halls of reason, I hear the tread of heavy jackboots, faint and far away, but steadily approaching.

David Nicholson is an assistant editor of The Washington Post.

Annotations in the Margin

Edward Rivera

THE HOUSE ON THE LAGOON
By Rosario Ferre
Farrar Straus Giroux. 407pp. $23

IN ROSARIO FERRE's epic family novel, The House On The Lagoon, Usable Monfort, wife of the Puerto Rican import merchant Quintin Aviles Mendizabal, is secretly writing a semi-fictional family novel of the same name. Like Ferre's own novel, it's a five-generation chronicle with abundant dirty laundry and assorted skeletons. Quintin has a degree in history from Columbia University, and when he comes upon Isabel's hidden manuscript, he's upset by her "fantastic fabrications." Why won't she stick to the facts? he wonders. "Good writers should try to protect the people they love." To set the family record straight, he proceeds to scribble his version of the truth in the margins of his wife's work-in-progress.

Especially infuriating to the literal-minded "historian" is Isabel's portrait of his father Buenaventura, a Spanish importer of cured ham and salted codfish, who boasts of his descent from Francisco Pizarro, the humble hog merchant who conquered the Incas. In Isabel's inspired account, Buenaventura adopts, unadapted, his swinish ancestor's "uncouth" heraldry, which depicts "a warlord beheading a hog," when everybody knows it's really "a chevalier hunting a wild boar." Worse still, as the first-time novelist depicts him, her father-in-law is a racist, a typical San Juan bourgeois bigot, and the father of numerous mulatto children (sexual "independence," thinks Quintin, "is part of a man's nature, the essence of his masculinity"). The patriarch is also a pro-Franco fascist who sided with the Germans during World War I and sold tainted asparagus to his fellow *criollos*. Finally, he's a short-tempered bully and a wife-beater. Not the kind of man you'd want for an in-law or a husband or a caterer.

Quintin worships his half-mad mother Rebecca (she favors his dilettante brother Ignacio), and he's outraged by Isabel's graphic description of how his father thrashed the ethereal Rebecca the day he caught her doing the Dance of the Seven Veils in her birthday suit during an amateur performance of Oscar Wilde's Salome. Buenaventura, the status-conscious martinet, "took off his cordovan belt and, livid with rage, flogged her until she fell unconscious to the floor." He says he did it "to make her come down to earth."

THE PUN seems unintended: After the brutal lashing she's "like a broken doll," according to Isabel's fictional Quintin — who was 7 at the time — and the sight of "his mother's naked body remained etched in his mind all his life." Rebecca ends her days a miserly, despotic widow who has her aging body pampered by underpaid black servants to retard decay.

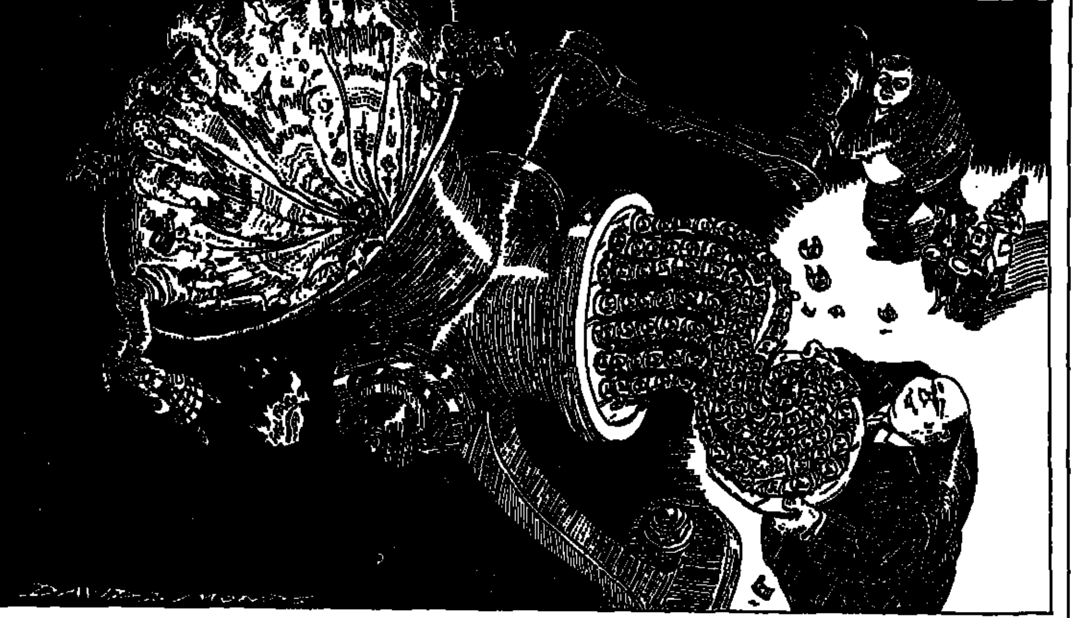
Quintin, missing the deeper, artistic truth behind Isabel's version of the beating — that men like his father resort to violence with impunity when their women step out of line — is "dumbstruck" by his wife's liberties with the family history. He's sure he could have been an artist-historian himself, but "he never had the opportunity to sit around doing nothing . . . watching the pelicans dive into the lagoon all day." This is Ferre's Quintin speaking, not Isabel's fabrication. History, he's convinced, can be just as artistic as fiction "if it's properly told."

"As a record of human endeavors," he goes on pompously and naively, "history is unalterable. A novelist may write lies, but a historian never can." Is this what he learned at Columbia? Did he miss out on Herodotus, whose archetypal "History" probably contains fewer facts than fabrications? In fairness to Quintin, though, some of his marginal emendations are pretty accurate critiques of his wife's novel-in-progress and, by extension, of Ferre's own ingenious novel about that novel. It's a complex, problematic book that refreshes age-old questions about the role of the artist/writer. The book also calls attention to itself as an "artifact," or fiction, in the postmodern manner, and cleverly undercuts criticism by rebutting it in advance.

As Quintin's mother could have told him: Like father, like son. Following in his father's footsteps, he calls Isabel "a little Medea" (she's no seductive Salome) and, in a fit of paranoia, slaps her around: He thinks she's in league with a pro-independence group of Puerto Rican terrorists that's out to destroy him, a pro-statehood capitalist. One of the leaders of that terrorist group is Manuel, his "pedigree" son by Isabel, whom he threw out of the house for falling in love with a beautiful mulatto. This is only one of the many incidents in which the fact-sodden historian hides the facts when it suits him.

In this absorbing, often humorous and ironic novel, Rosario Ferre, one of Puerto Rico's leading writers and a noted feminist, raises troubling questions about troubling issues, including the political status of an island that has never enjoyed full independence and is in danger of losing its cultural identity to U.S. dominion. Ferre is too good a writer to supply solutions to the issues she raises — that's up to the reader — but in the process of this book she proves herself one of Latin America's most gifted novelists. Like Gabriel Garcia Marquez's One Hundred Years Of Solitude and Isabel Allende's The House Of The Spirits, which it sometimes resembles, The House On The Lagoon should appeal to a wide audience. Readers may well want a sequel.

Edward Rivera is the author of Family Installments: Memories of Growing Up Hispanic.



Tight-fisted Britain is rich

It's baloney for the right to say the welfare state's finances are in crisis, writes **Will Hutton**

FOR 20 years, British economic policy has been dominated by the apparent necessity of containing the growth of public spending, borrowing and debt. Thus was the rise of the right and eclipse of the left cemented.

But these are just the first signs of an era coming to an end. It is not only that in relation to national output British public spending and taxation are low in the international league tables. Britain also has the lowest level of public debt to national output of the leading industrialised countries, and the OECD projects that it will be eliminated over the next generation.

Other countries, notably in mainland Europe, may be entering a crisis of public spending and debt; but that cannot be said of Britain. Instead, the policy crunch from the late 1990s on will be how to allocate the growing fiscal dividend between tax cuts, public spending increases and a continual reduction of the national debt. Moreover, discretionary budgetary policy can once again join the British government's policy armoury. The consequences for economic and political debate will be seismic; the right will no longer hold all the cards.

The political problem for the Conservatives is that this new world will not emerge until the middle years of the next parliament at the earliest, and only then courtesy of a Draconian freeze in public spending lasting over this and the next two financial years. But this is why the Chancellor believes he must commit himself in the Budget to a phased programme to bring the standard rate of income tax to 20p in the pound and abolish capital gains tax and inheritance tax by 1998/99.

This year's tax cuts can only reach a modest £3 billion, as the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Goldman Sachs projected last week in their annual rehearsal of the Chancellor's budget options — the Green Budget. But by committing himself to a phased programme the Chancellor can capitalise upon the improving position in two years' time.

For those schooled in the economics and politics of the *jihad* against the public sector, the sudden emergence of this gravy train will seem improbable. Isn't the welfare state an insupportable burden? Isn't Britain drowning in a sea of public debt?

Not so. Social security spending in Britain stood at 13.9 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1994, the OECD computes. Only Japan in the Group of Seven leading industrialised countries spent less, at 12.8 per cent of GDP. Even the United States, spending 14.2 per cent, ranks above Britain; in Europe, only Iceland spends less.

Nor is that all. The Japanese have a generous public pensions scheme, so that Japan's social security spending is set to mushroom. By contrast Britain, committed only to uprating a minimal state pension and income support generally in line with prices rather than wages, has negligible obligations.

On top of that, the social security secretary has been quietly tightening the eligibility criteria for most forms of income support.

In other words, apart from Iceland, Britain runs the meanest, tightest, lowest-cost social security system in the developed world, and it is set to become more so. Newt Gingrich and the Republican right will do well to get near the British example.

The British "success" arises in part because it permits its recipients to live in conditions of greater relative poverty than in any other country — and in part because pensions, one of the most expensive parts of welfare provision, are organised not around the pay-as-you-go principle so that the Exchequer bears the cost, but are mainly funded out of savings invested in the world's stocks and shares.

But there is no such thing as a free lunch. The state may have escaped the cost of providing the bulk of retirement incomes, but only to displace it on to the company sector.

To meet the demands of their pension-fund paymasters, British companies set the highest hurdle rates and shortest pay-back periods of any company sector anywhere — hollowing out British industry and creating an insecure, low-paid labour force.

But the impact on the Exchequer has been astonishingly benign. Britain's public finances are going to be transformed in the long run both absolutely and compared with other countries — at least if the 11 million social security claimants fall into ever greater poverty, as current plans seem to guarantee. Indeed, the OECD computes that in 35 years' time not only will Britain have paid off its national debt completely but the Government will have a cash mountain equal to 9 per cent of GDP. Japan's national debt will have exploded to 289 per cent of GDP.

This, of course, is on the assumption that economic growth, public spending and productivity grow as they have in the past and that policies towards taxes and spending remain unchanged, which, as the OECD remarks elliptically, "may well not be realistic". In other words, future British governments will increase shrunken welfare spending in response to unacceptable levels of poverty, or boost education and health spending, or dramatically cut taxes so that the national debt will not get paid off.

But the consensus that Britain's welfare state and public finances are in some structural crisis — underpinning the assertions, for example, of private health care lobby groups that charging will have to be introduced in the NHS — is baloney.

This year's Budget will define the new era and, in the Green Budget, Gavyn Davies of Goldman Sachs has produced figures showing the scope for higher public spending or lower taxes by 1997/98 — on the assumption not that the Government moves its finances into surplus but that it carries on borrowing at a level which keeps the national debt at the same proportional level as it stands today.

If in addition we assume the economy hits its long-run growth rate of 2.5 per cent in 1998, Mr Davies projects that the Government could have a steady state national debt and £12 billion extra for spending or taxes in 1997/98; the following year it would have a good £18 billion — and thereafter, the OECD projects, the numbers get even larger.

This is where the choices begin. The Conservative option is plain. The cost of the commitment to eliminate inheritance and capital gains tax is £2.4 billion, while a 20p standard rate of income tax will cost £10 billion. If the tax cuts are phased so the full effect takes place in 1998/99, public spending on education and the police could also rise by some billions — and, on Mr Davies's figures, still leave a margin. This is what the Chancellor will announce in the Budget as a commitment, and what the Conservatives will campaign on at the general election.

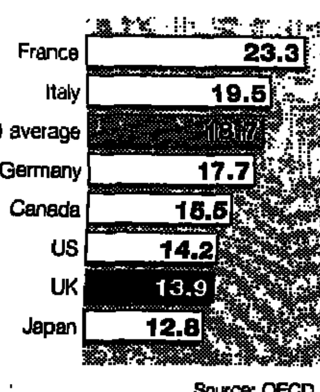
But everything is predicated on the progressive pauperisation of those who live on income support and state pensions, continual cuts in public provision, and a further round of pay curbs and job losses in the public sector. Such tax cuts will lead to even more inequality of income and wealth, widespread tax avoidance as the incentive to turn taxed income into untaxed capital gains becomes immense and a burst of consumption that will lead to an unsustainable trade deficit.

Nor is any of this the necessary and sufficient condition of wealth creation; that hinges on raising savings and investment levels, and tackling at root the cause of those high hurdle rates and short pay-back periods.

What is happening is that a political choice about the character of Britain is being dressed up as economic necessity. In truth, neither the choice nor its necessity stands up to any form of sustained scrutiny.

Social Security spending

Percentage GDP, 1994



Source: OECD

Clarke hints at tax cuts

THE UK Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, abandoned all pretence at the Tory party conference last week that he and John Major are not planning to launch a series of high-profile tax-cutting initiatives designed to carry the Conservatives from next month's Budget to beyond the expected 1997 general election, *writes Michael White.*

In a confident speech, the Chancellor tried to cheer the Tory faithful without alarming sentiment in the City, where doubts about the affordability of lower income taxes were heightened by last week's rise in inflation to 3.9 per cent.

Though senior ministers later went out of their way to stress the Clarke text had been weeded of any language that could be construed as a Budget clue, it unmistakably promised to address what the Chancellor called the priorities of Middle Britain — the goal of "reducing tax on hard work, savings and enterprise".

"I can't tell you what is going to be in my Budget," he said, "but it will be based on traditional Tory values. And it will be a Budget that I am looking forward to a lot more than the last two" — in which taxes rose sharply to contain the ballooning Treasury deficit.

Mr Clarke pressed a series of party "hot buttons", mocking the European social chapter as a destroyer of jobs, and warning that Labour's gut instincts remained destructive. But he admitted controlling spending would require policy changes.

In Brief

THE collapse of Barings Bank could have been averted and reflected institutional incompetence, a Singapore investigator's report has found. Meanwhile, the man at the centre of the saga, former futures trader Nick Leeson, has sold his story of the £860 million bank crash for £450,000. Publishers Little Brown said the book would embarrass a number of people.

JAPAN'S finance minister, Masayoshi Takemura, has apologised for the delay in reporting Daiwa Bank's $1.1 billion losses on trading in US Treasury bonds.

TYCOON Robert Maxwell was a dominating boss capable of verbal brutality, his son Kevin told the Old Bailey where he, his brother Ian and financial adviser Larry Trachtenberg are accused of conspiring to defraud trustees and beneficiaries of Maxwell pension funds.

DRUGS group Fisons has recommended the hostile £1.83 billion bid from Franco-American rival Rhône-Poulenc Rorer, after the collapse of a "white knight" rescue, thought to involve Hoffman La Roche of Switzerland.

THE Court of Appeal hearing of the four men convicted in the Guinness trial has heard claims that in 1987 Michael Howard, then a trade and industry minister, supported a government decision to use DTI inspectors with special powers to interrogate the defendants rather than ask the police, who would have had to grant them the right of silence.

BERND PISCHETSRIEDER, chairman of BMW, owner of Rover, urged European carmakers to emulate British costs and labour reforms, which had proved to be a magnet for overseas investment.

HOUSE prices are plunging in the North of England but those in London have returned to 1993 levels, says the Halifax building society.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates October 9	Sterling rates October 16
Australia	2.0757-2.0798	2.0803-2.0844
Austria	15.75-15.78	15.72-15.74
Belgium	46.08-46.18	45.96-46.07
Canada	2.1134-2.1165	2.1046-2.1078
Denmark	8.70-8.73	8.66-8.68
France	7.86-7.87	7.80-7.81
Germany	2.2374-2.2405	2.2362-2.2393
Hong Kong	12.25-12.28	12.17-12.18
Ireland	0.9791-0.9816	0.9774-0.9800
Italy	2,549-2,553	2,522-2,525
Japan	159.08-159.36	158.10-158.37
Netherlands	2.5090-2.5123	2.5004-2.5037
New Zealand	2.3881-2.3914	2.3843-2.3884
Norway	9.90-9.91	9.84-9.85
Portugal	235.51-236.15	234.97-235.60
Spain	194.55-194.84	192.89-193.16
Sweden	11.03-11.06	10.95-10.97
Switzerland	1.8082-1.8110	1.8107-1.8135
USA	1.5848-1.5858	1.5748-1.5758
ECU	1.2223-1.2234	1.2145-1.2160

FTSE100 Share index up 47 at [illegible]. FTSE 250 index down 14.1 at [illegible]. Gold down $0.75 at $384.00.

Too clean for dreams

Erlend Clouston

SCOTLAND is savouring the news that a film of Jude The Obscure, the classic English hard luck story, is to be shot in Edinburgh because Oxford, its original location, is now too clean.

Robbed by sand-blasting of the "sober secondary and tertiary hues" with which author Thomas Hardy decorated "Christminster", the Revolution Films production has transferred the tragedy of the upwardly-mobile mason to the gloomier environs of the Scottish capital.

The news, which carries with it two weeks of filming worth about £1 million to the local economy, was not well received in Oxford — screen home of Inspector Morse and Young Sherlock Holmes.

"How odd; why?" wondered a startled council spokeswoman. "Oxford is unique, and it's a pity they haven't gone for authenticity," sniffed former lord mayor Mrs Gatehouse, a member of the economic development committee.

Andrew Eaton, producer of the film which will star Christopher Eccleston in the title role, defended the decision to set his version of the 100-year-old novel 300 miles north.

"Most of Oxford's buildings have been cleaned or restored and you end up with a lot of light-coloured stone blocks," he explained. "In Edinburgh, the stone is much darker. Jude dreams of the spires, and so on, but when he gets there it turns out to be a slightly grim place."

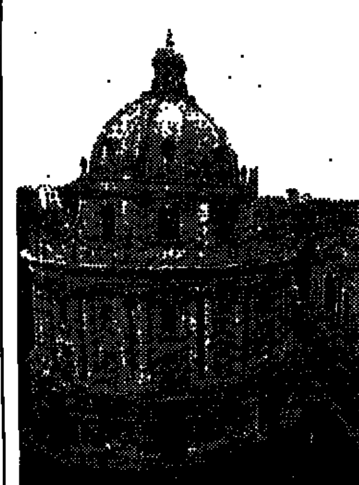


Where there's muck there's brass . . . Edinburgh (above) triumphed over Oxford (below) PHOTOGRAPHS. RICHARD BUTCHINS/DENIS THORPE

In its willingness to secure Jude, which will require 500 extras when shooting starts later this month, Edinburgh has agreed to risk tourists' wrath by shutting off 200 yards of the High Street for two Saturdays and a Sunday. The city has raised an estimated £4 million from film-makers over the past three years, even managing to pass itself off as part of Nova Scotia for a joint Canadian-British production.

Edinburgh's success in poaching Jude is being viewed philosophically by Robert Gasser, bursar of Brasenose College, who handles requests for university backdrops.

"My experience is that locations fulfil an aesthetic need of the director that the real place might not," he said — revealing that Oxford, clean or not, can still appeal to contemporary film-makers. "Gulliver's Travels was shot here in the summer, with that chap from Cheers."



Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

ACCORDING to Suetonius, the Caesar Galba introduced "the spectacular novelty of tightrope-walking elephants" at the Floral Games. Is this really possible and, if so, has it ever been performed since?

THE activity is more like tightrope roller-skating. There are two wires, not one, arranged in parallel, and separated by the width of an elephant — around eight feet off the ground. Sturdy rollers are attached in the manner of horseshoes to the elephants' feet, and after having been hoisted aloft by crane and aligned with the high wire, the animal is pulled along by several groundlings using ropes. This is possible because, when suspended in space, elephants become paralysed and rigid. (The phenomenon was first discovered by Romans while loading their cattle on to cargo ships.) This might sound complicated, but it's a thin feat compared with other Roman entertainments, such as the re-enactment of sea battles in the middle of a city.

The feat has been attempted since, in the freakshows of 19th century American circuses. In Lexington, Virginia in 1862, an elephant fell from the wires, slicing off a leg in the process. A bill was passed through Congress after this which formed the basis for modern animal welfare legislation in the US. — *Robbie Fraser (author, Packing The Trunk), Kilburn, London*

WHY IS the Lake of Menteith in Scotland called a lake when every other similar body of water in Scotland is called a Loch?

THE Lake of Menteith was originally known as the Loch of Inchmahome, a name derived from the main island upon which was built an Augustinian priory in the 12th century. The anglicised term "lake" is believed to have resulted from an error by a Dutch cartographer who mistook the odd pronunciation "laigh", an old Scots word for a low-lying area, and applied the English "lake". However, the more romantic may prefer the story that "lake" was applied to the water following the Earl of Menteith's betrayal of Sir William Wallace to the English, since only an Englishman could have betrayed Scotland's most noted hero and therefore he did not deserve to have a loch on his estates. — *Alan P Barker, Edinburgh*

HOW can I prove that you exist?

WHO said that? — *Paul Thompson, Stoneycroft, Shropshire*

ASSUME that I don't, and that you are alone in the universe. Why, in that case, did you wait for this reply instead of imagining it for yourself? — *Michael McCarthy, London*

Any answers?

HOW does a seedless grape reproduce itself? — *Michael Jeans, Southwold, Suffolk*

WE ARE told the British gave the world the sports of cricket, soccer and rugby. Of these, only soccer has been widely taken up in those countries that were not part of the empire. Why? — *Peter Nicklin, Benton, Newcastle upon Tyne*

HAS anyone from the winning side ever been found guilty of war crimes? — *Pete Norman, Putney, London*

IS LEAD acetate — contained in some anti-grey hair lotions — dangerous to the user? — *Bill Bowler, Spain*

IN THE early fifties I am convinced we were taught that Mount Godwin-Austen was the second highest mountain in the world. What happened to it? When did K2 appear? — *J W. Patten, Runcorn, Cheshire*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/4417,1-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ Notes & Queries Volume 5 is published by Fourth Estate (£6.99)

Letter from the Dordogne Michael Mills

Raising the flag

IN OUR part of France, when someone is elected to the village council, he invites everyone to a party at his house. The occasion is the hoisting of the new councillor's *mai*. The mai, originally the same word as the English maypole, is a tall pole traditionally hoisted at someone's house to do them honour. For centuries, peasants thus honoured their gentry on the first of May, getting in exchange a day off to celebrate the start of the happiest month — the origin of the May Day holiday.

The mai erected to honour a new councillor is a fresh-felled, straight young chestnut or pine tree, cut to four metres, twigs and leaves shaved off except for a sprig at the top, and decorated with garlands and a cluster of French flags. One flag is provided by the Mairie, the others are gifts from supporters, who may also bring the garlands they have woven from box-leaves, sometimes intertwined with red, white and blue crêpe paper.

The minimum size of a municipal council is 11, so a village of barely 100 souls has more than 10 per cent of its people serving on the council. Elections are held every six years, in April. The mai festivities thus happen, appropriately, in May. This spring, though, the municipal elections coincided with seven-yearly presidential elections — something which will not happen again for 42 years. The Conseil d'Etat, which sees to these things, decided presidents took precedence and postponed the municipal elections until June.

July and August are France's holiday months, and anyway, most of us would find it too hot in high summer to start hoisting heavy poles into the air. So the mai parties were put off until September.

You can tell a councillor's popularity by how many flags he gets. The local record this year was 17, for a carpenter from the next village. One of our neighbours, who has just returned from the army and been elected at his first try, has the most ostentatious mai I have ever seen. His grandfather was on the council for years. But his father, with whom he doesn't get on, has tried many times, fruitlessly. Father and son live across from each other at the crossroads on the hill. Every morning for the rest of his life, old Victor (who was born in the farmhouse my family and I now live in) will look out of his bedroom window to see his son's flag-snapping mai standing proudly against the hilltop sky, a permanent *bras d'honneur* for all to savour.

Not all mais are planted in the ground. The main thing is for them to be seen from a distance. Our house nestles in a valley fold, visible from nowhere except the air; and in June, Madame got herself elected. When the neighbours came round to drink wine and eat walnut cake one early September Sunday afternoon, there was much argument about where to put the mai (she, modern lass that she is, even dared suggest not putting it up at all, to the horror of our farming neighbours).

Eventually they decided our mai should go up a tree. Taking our double ladder and coils of agricultural wire, Roger and Michel climbed up one of our tallest oaks and strapped the garlanded, ribboned, beflagged (she got three) mai as high as they could. It's not that visible, but at least the flags and garlands are all still there, which is more than can be said for most of the other mais after the recent high winds: even the carpenter lost his flags.

SOME mais have a wooden plaque saying things like "Honneur à notre Conseiller", or "Honneur à notre Elu". Philippe, our young neighbour up the hill, stood for election this spring, and to everyone's delight, got in. He invited the village round in the usual way for a late-afternoon drink, and after the normal shouting and shoving, we got his mai hoisted in the middle of the farmyard. The paint was still wet on the plaque that said, simply, "Honneur à notre Philippe".

Thérèse and Marc, his parents, then threw the covers off the makeshift lean-to they had constructed next to the farmhouse, to reveal trestle tables groaning under a banquet. In the face of this *fait accompli*, no one left — not even the families at permanent loggerheads with Philippe's, only there to see the mai erected. It was a grand coup, with the Dumonteil family hosting three generations of their two chief rivals, the Juillets and the Lesvignes. And they all stayed until two o'clock in the morning. Honneur à notre Philippe, indeed.

A Country Diary

Thomas D McCombs

MURIWAI, New Zealand: An albatross, still in youthful grey, spirals steadily to the right, riding the updraught where the southwesterly, after 5,000 miles of uninterrupted passage from the Antarctic, slams against the unyielding west coast cliffs.

Far below, the basalt stack known as Gannet Rock is filling up as its handsome residents resume their permanent nests. After public displays of necking and other elaborate mating behaviour, pairs will produce a single egg — to be hatched by both parents. In a few months, these novices must plunge off their rock and fly 4,000 miles across the raging Tasman Sea to Tasmania.

The Australasian Gannet, a rarity in that its numbers are increasing — unlike almost every other native species — is crowding out tourists at the two observation platforms.

Each April, the gannets show an uncanny ability to sense the oncoming of northerly winds that make their flight possible against the prevailing westerly trades. They spend three years on the Australian coast before returning permanently, like many human Kiwis before them.

Rosellas, originally blown across from Australia by those same tradewinds, flash brilliant reds and greens in the pohutukawa trees below, and the native tui sucks nectar from flax flowers. Tiny waxeyes chase insects under the baleful eye of the myna, which came to these shores from India many years ago.

The albatross reaches the altitude of our front deck, and with one final loop, passes overhead, heading inland to who know where or what.

Le Monde

After Deng, the next Great Leap Forward

China keeps an eye on its Communist past as it looks to a more dynamic economic future, reports **Francis Deron** in Beijing

WILL the process of reforming the economic dinosaur that China has inherited from the Soviet Union continue after Deng Xiaoping's death? The Chinese regime has been seeking an answer to this question in order to refute criticism that it is seriously short of ideas.

One forum in which the question has been discussed was the Communist Party central committee's plenary session last month. Usually held in the autumn after the summer consultations of the senior leaders, this was the fifth meeting of this body, set up in 1992 on the eve of the 14th Party congress as Deng was beginning to open up the Chinese market and campaign for growth.

Judging by the various documents connected with the meeting that were published early this month, the answer has not been very convincing. Yes, the reform process will continue, but at the same time the regime insists that party control of the economy should be strengthened.

The "Party parliament" has adopted development proposals designed to correct certain imbalances that have appeared as the economy began to get off the ground in recent years, but the dynamic created by opening up the economy to the world will not be snapped.



Jiang Zemin: supremacy of the public sector is imperative

Communist Party general secretary Jiang Zemin, who is also president of China, spoke at length about the need for the party apparatus to take in hand those sections of the administration that have escaped its control. The result is that China's senior leadership has failed to dissipate the impression of having great difficulty agreeing on what direction to give the country after the death of its elder statesman.

The central committee's "proposals" concern not only the next five-year plan (1996-2000) but also the 15 years to 2010. For a regime having a hard time trying to stay on top of present developments, this way of projecting itself into the future betrays apprehensions about its survival at a time when its economic dogmas are being severely tested.

Its long statement stipulates that China must "set up a relatively complete socialist market economy". The goal is, first, to attain by 2000 a per capita GNP four times higher than 1980, then double the figure in the next 10 years. This would become "a solid foundation for modernising the base" of the country in the mid-21st century.

The Chinese people as a whole are told they can then expect to have reached a level of prosperity comparable with that of developed countries.

This long-term view of the country's development is not without ulterior motives. The aim is to give a theoretical basis to the idea that between now and the 2050 deadline, China's sole master has to be the official Communist Party leadership, since reforming the system depends on "stability", a euphemism for the absence of internal dissent and external criticism.

The party leader dwells at length on the imperative nature of what he calls the "public sector's supremacy" in economic matters, while the central committee's programme stresses the need to ensure that the rapid rate of development is flanked by measures designed to give back to the state certain prerogatives that are out of its hands.

"The power of macroeconomic control should be concentrated in the central government's hands," explains the programme, while ensuring that the special characteristics and interests of particular areas "are fully taken into consideration".

Judging by the phenomenon of "over-decentralisation", this is not the situation today, Jiang concedes.

Despite misgivings, the regime endorses the existence of regional factors — probably one of the most decisive changes Deng will have have stamped on the development of his country in 17 years.

But the regime is also urging a fairer redistribution of the fruits of liberalisation towards industrial bases that have yet to be established, and the renewal of the Chinese heartland.

From these attempts to shape priorities, the state appears to recognise that China is very different today from what it was before Deng Xiaoping. But it refuses to consider forms of government different from those of the Communist period.

The regime's line has changed, however, from what it was at the end of the last presidency, before Mao's death in 1967: Leninist antiquities such as the "class struggle" have been abandoned, and all that is left is the concern to improve the people's lot through economic remedies.

(October 11)

Aid that isn't so unselfish

EDITORIAL

THERE are two kinds of poor countries: those one fears, and those one ignores.

Mexico was convulsed by a financial crisis in December 1994 that threatened the international banking system. Within days, an aid package running to several billion dollars was rustled up under International Monetary Fund auspices to prevent the country from collapsing. The worst was averted.

The world's leading bankers are convinced the Mexican crisis could be the forerunner of others so they decided in Washington last month to work out a system whereby the IMF would closely monitor developments in member-countries to provide a kind of early warning of financial upheavals.

They adopted the principle of a stand-by fund whose size ($50 billion) should make speculators think twice before attacking a developing country's currency.

The fact that Washington has willingly agreed to chip in says much for US fears of being caught up in the financial crash of a neighbour. The truth is that it was American interests, whether banks or firms solidly established on the other side of the border, which were primarily threatened by the Mexican financial crisis.

One cannot help noting that the United States does not show the same concern when its interests are not directly involved. For example, so large are the arrears Washington owes the United Nations that the organisation is almost bankrupt.

More worrying still, Bill Clinton's America gives the impression of reverting to what was most hateful about the Reagan era. The Republican-dominated Senate and House of Representatives have decided to prune the funds at the World Bank's disposal for helping less developed countries. In this way, the principal tool for helping the least-advantaged countries is likely to be paralysed.

The United States is not the only country that lends itself to criticism on this point. A few weeks ago, the World Bank proposed waiving a part of the multilateral debt owed by less developed countries. Briefly hailed by some western leaders, it has been stifled under a shower of praise: the IMF's international committee has decided to postpone its consideration, perhaps until next spring.

France, which takes a crit[illegible] view of the US attitude in [illegible] area, likes to present it[illegible] policy in these international bodi[illegible] on down defender of the poorer [illegible] French finance mi[illegible] dissatis- Arthuis has been [illegible] ners and low- tradition. But [illegible] result in "an rhetoric would [illegible] tent". Meanwhile, ing if Paris w[illegible] young Mercedes-dri- to cut its o[illegible] eneurs with cellular some Uni[illegible] joined the scene. ment pro[illegible]

(October 13)

When mercenaries are a junta's best friend

François Picard in Freetown

WHEN Sierra Leone's ruling junta last May called in South African mercenaries employed by Executive Outcomes, the men immediately concentrated their activities in the diamond-rich Kono region.

Officially, this small republic's young officers, who have been fighting against the Revolutionary United Front rebels for the past three years, expected the South African reinforcements to put more muscle into a campaign that has been staggering from one defeat to another.

Humanitarian aid sources in Freetown, however, consider the actual mission of the men sent by Executive Outcomes is to facilitate the extraction and export of the country's mineral wealth. The Afrikaner mercenaries are said to be the heirs of apartheid working in the cause of diamonds — first in Angola, where they helped government forces to repel Unita rebel attacks, and now in Sierra Leone.

But others say that ordinary people here swear by the newcomers, who are believed to number about 200. The capital's residents refer to them as "our saviours" and admire the blond fighters' discipline and seriousness.

"Our army has often been accused of behaving like the rebels by indulging in looting and plundering," said Dennis Bright, a Freetown teacher. "After the loss of confidence in the army, the arrival of the South Africans has boosted morale."

Their intervention has been felt as a turning point in the war against the Front. Founded by a former Sierra Leone army photographer, Corporal Foday Sankoh, the rebels started the war in 1991 from neighbouring Liberia, with Charles Taylor's support, by attacking villages and transport convoys and paralysing the country's economic life.

But last month the Front, which had rejected all offers to negotiate, asked to meet some of the country's civilian representatives. A British High Commission official acknowledged that, though there are still no direct talks between the Front and Captain Valentine Strasser's regime, "the rebels are no longer operating without constraint and for this the South Africans have to be thanked".

Shortly before the mercenaries arrived, another attempt to strengthen the Sierra Leone army came to nothing when reinforcements of Nepalese Gurkhas, the British army's former shock troops, called it a day and left the country after their commander was killed.

"It's because our army is poorly trained that we have to call on Executive Outcomes," explained Foreign Minister Alusine Fofanah.

After the 1992 military coup, the government undertook to put an end to the fighting by doubling the army's size to more than 14,000 men. But the new recruits received practically no training before being sent into action. Badly paid and badly led, some of them deserted. To raise a little spare cash, others have been selling their equipment — which is how rebel RUF fighters, deserters and government soldiers have come to be wearing the same combat uniform.

In public Brigadier Bert Sachse, commander of Executive Outcomes' Sierra Leone project, takes a more sympathetic view of government army errors and failed endeavours. "It would be unfair to tar everybody with the same brush," he said.

Sierra Leone's army provides the peasants with no protection, but it escorts miners to prospect for diamonds in the Tongo quarries

Privately, though, his men complain about the unwillingness of the soldiers they are expected to train. One South African mercenary said that in the Kono region, where prospecting for diamonds is banned, Sierra Leonean soldiers "dig right in front of our eyes when they are supposed to be on guard duty. We tell them not to do it, but they don't want to listen. Since we have been telling them to stop digging, some have even started to threaten us more or less openly."

Brigadier Sachse is not very forthcoming about what his men are doing. He simply says his mission is to "stabilise the situation" in Sierra Leone. "Everybody accuses us of being just a bunch of mercenaries, but all over the world there are agencies specialising in security whose work is to protect their customers' interests."

De Beers, the South African giant which controls half the world's diamond output and more than 70 per cent of its sales, flatly denies any involvement in the venture.

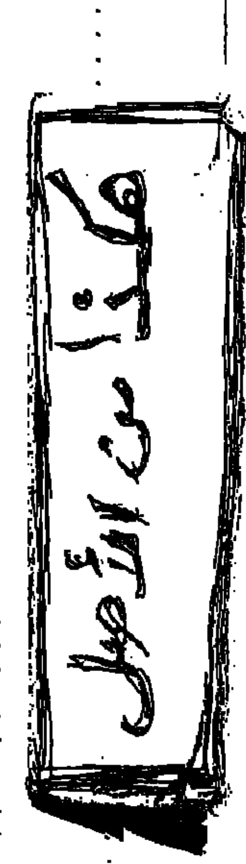
"We have never hired mercenaries and we would never hire them, period," said Andrew Lamont, the firm's spokesman. According to him, De Beers' activities in Sierra Leone are limited to working an offshore concession situated at the mouth of the Sewa river.

Peter Miller, mining research manager for London-based Yorkton Securities, says the amount of diamonds smuggled out of Sierra Leone is a minor concern for De Beers — the country exported one million carats in 1975 compared with 300,000 in 1993 — even if the presence of Executive Outcomes is "indeed a very fine coincidence".

Meanwhile, this former British colony's capital is visibly going to rack and ruin and the situation is worse in the provinces. Food shortages are already being felt at Kenema, the country's third largest built-up area. Large numbers of peasants, who no longer dare to return to their villages, have taken refuge there.

The Sierra Leonean army provides them with no protection, but finds the time to escort miners who go out every day to prospect for diamonds in the Tongo Field quarries, some 45km from here.

(October 1/2)



French traders make a killing in Algeria

The risks are enormous, but the profits guaranteed. Despite guerrilla violence, **Véronique Maurus** reports, business with the former colony is booming

SHE is 45 years old and runs a small pharmaceuticals business. She cannot be identified "for obvious security reasons". Even so, she is nervous, like all the people I have met who have been subjected to anonymous phone threats — up to 20 calls a day — for the past year. She was going up to Paris to collect her son at his university because she feared he might be kidnapped.

For her, Algeria is a gold mine, her dream market accounting for more than half her turnover and the better part of her profits. It was too bad about Islamist threats to kill anyone trading with France. Too bad about the repeated warnings the French authorities have been giving business people.

She was going ahead regardless, travelling to Algiers undaunted by a six-hour wait in a queue for a "horribly crowded" plane, dealing with cancellations, pitfalls, harassment, and defying bomb blasts, kidnappings and sundry perils.

"I am afraid," she confessed, "but I have no alternative. The post is functioning very badly, the service is infiltrated by the FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) and the police tap the phones. Because of visa difficulties, my customers can rarely come over to France. As a human being, I don't have the right to expose someone else to danger."

So, like everyone else, she is trying to limit the risks — never revealing in advance when she is due to arrive in Algiers or where she is staying; never checking into a hotel or taking a taxi; travelling only in a chauffeur-driven car and "at top speed". She keeps her movements in Algiers down to a minimum and uses "a small car rather than an armour-plated vehicle".

She does not talk about her trips to Algiers "because of my parents. They'd worry themselves sick." And also because of Coface (the organisation that underwrites French exports), which has warned her it would not insure any contract requiring the presence of French personnel in Algeria.

Contrary to the general belief that French business leaders lack initiative, exporters are prepared to take all necessary risks when their businesses are at stake. There are hundreds of business people going about their work in secret. The French-Algerian Chamber of Commerce puts the number of companies living almost exclusively on trade with Algeria at more than 1,000 out of a total of 9,500 exporters.

The more cautious arrange to meet their customers in France or Tunisia (the only country Algerians can visit without a visa), or even on board ships moored off Marseilles. The larger firms pay their Algerian representatives on the spot. While everyone hides, nobody complains. On the contrary, Algerian market specialists have even begun to smile lately. "It's 10 years since business has been so good," they say.

People are cutting one another's throats in Algeria, but it's business as usual. "The situation is tense, but not trade," was the cynical verdict of a senior civil servant. French exports to Algeria rose last year by more than 12 per cent and hit peaks of 30 to 40 per cent in food, pharmaceutical products and steel, among others.

This year promises to be even better: sales in the first half of 1995 are well over the levels in the corresponding period last year and the situation is improving every month. Exports of goods to Algiers from Marseilles rose by more than quarter in 1994 and by 50 per cent in the first half of this year.

Since its debts were restructured and the bulk of its repayments put off until after 2000, Algeria has money and, for the first time in a long while, can even afford the luxury of paying hard cash. It is therefore importing large quantities of cereals, sugar, milk, pharmaceuticals, spare parts, machines, raw materials and so on.

After three lean years of shortages, the demands are enormous. Algeria is stepping up its imports as the number of trade channels has increased, thereby reducing the weight of the big state bodies that were once the cumbersome obligatory intermediaries.

No longer is prior authorisation necessary for imports. All that is needed for importing anything is money — foreign currency or dinars deposited in the bank in exchange for a letter of credit.

A host of private importers are competing with the public enterprises. They range from big traditional traders to former smugglers, end users such as doctors and car mechanics and even civil servants who have set up their own businesses which replicate the work of the government offices employing them.

THIS frenzied hunger to buy is fed by showrooms, which "multi-service" importers have opened all over the country. "They're real Ali Baba's caves," said one Algerian. "You find everything there, from a set of tyres to lipstick and kiwi fruit. But, of course, you need to add a couple of zeros to the price ..."

As the country's leading suppliers, the French also make the largest profits. Algeria has become France's third most important customer and the first among developing countries. Trade with Algeria was five billion francs ($1 billion) in the black last year, making it the fifth largest importer of French goods. Algeria alone accounts for more sales of French pharmaceuticals than all the other African countries put together.

It is often forgotten that self-interest is primarily behind the 5 billion francs credit line that France has extended to Algeria. It is something the FIS and opponents of the Algerian government denounce, and it has become a controversial issue at the French foreign ministry and prime minister's office. Some top Algerian officials are obviously creaming off profits from a few big contracts, but the bulk of the credits nevertheless help to sustain French exports and investments in Algeria's oil that guarantee future earnings and, therefore, the country's capacity to repay its debts.

"We are extending credits to Algeria because it is our neighbour and our debtor," was how one senior civil servant summed up the situation. "This is necessary if we want to be repaid one day." In the meantime, it is French industry and the trade balance that are benefiting most.

"You have to be a real exporter to work in Algeria," said another anonymous hero of French foreign commerce. "In any other place, it's enough to be a distributor."

The trouble is everything combines to increase the number of pitfalls. Insecurity and the difficulty of making contacts are compounded by exasperation with the guerrilla fighting. Algerian ports, postal and customs services provide so many traps.

Then there is the so-called "revolutionary tax" that many pay without a murmur and even without knowing to whom it really goes; and thefts of entire truckloads of goods hijacked as soon as they roll off the ships, right under the eyes of dockers who are either in cahoots with racketeers or have been intimidated.

It must not be forgotten, however, that French bankers, their fingers burned by the rescheduling of debts, are reluctant to confirm the least letter of credit, and they charge prohibitive rates.

The procedural hurdles an exporter has to clear are reminiscent of a battlefield. The first is communications. Practically everything is conducted over the phone or by fax — when the lines work. Even so, an infinite number of precautions have to be taken because of taps. Some use codes, others switch from French to English, then to German and Spanish to confound eavesdroppers.

One trader in food products who has installed highly sophisticated communications equipment in his house pointed out: "You've got to have a direct phone line to the customs, the bank president and the head of the port authority. Without that, your containers are cleaned out. It's a jungle."

The second difficulty is direct contacts. Even the most courageous businessmen ration their visits to Algiers. Only large companies can maintain an office in the city. French businessmen are generally suspicious of the many "middlemen" who offer their services through the French embassy and the Chamber of Commerce. "Our best agents are our customers," exporters insist.

The trick is to persuade customers to come to France regularly. After many hiccups, a circuit has been worked out for delivering visas through the French-Algerian Chamber of Commerce. Any excuse is good for organising discreet meetings — medical seminars, business conventions, official conferences.

The third snag is in arranging protection for business contacts. Algerian customers and business representatives are in the front line of fire. French exporters consequently go to extraordinary lengths to remain undetected.

This is easy enough for a small exporter: he has only to keep his mouth shut. Bigger businessmen have higher profiles and are therefore more vulnerable, so they cheat: bogus names, false nationalities (in association with Belgian and Italian companies), false origins of goods (shipped via Genoa or Barcelona), false "scientific bureaux" concealing the representative's real office, fake warehouses for "equipment under repair" that serve as storage points, false "self-employed" persons who are in fact salaried company staff ("Nobody is fooled, but it's not provocative"), and so on.

One business group has kept the company plaque and name on its front door. Its offices stand next-door to the main police station, but they are often empty, for the staff takes care not to come in during working hours.

Only the oil companies boldly identify themselves as such. They don't have a choice, for it is impossible in this sector not to send expatriates to operate on the ground. But they are experienced in protecting themselves and have the resources for it. Above all, they enjoy absolute priority on both sides of the Mediterranean because the oil and gas resources they are developing are a guarantee of future earnings.

Charter planes connect Paris and Hassi Messaoud directly without going through Algiers. Like the small private planes flying to and from the oil fields, like the cars and oilfields themselves, they are closely guarded by the Algerian army and "private French security firms" which are more or less disguised offshoots of the French secret service.

All this is expensive. If exporters are hanging on, it is because profits are correspondingly high. "One earns money more easily than anywhere else," admitted a maintenance expert. "The competition is less tough, so prices and profit margins are better."

In short, Algeria may be fearful, but it pays up. And more and more. "Once they used to ask us to arrange the financing," said a Marseilles businessman. "You went in for a lot of barter then — meat for oil products or fertiliser. Today, they pay cash up front most of the time. If you have picked a financially sound trading partner, you'll have no problems."

FRENCH exporters say that, notwithstanding the guerrilla war and the confusion, the Algerian economy has at last begun developing into a market system. Local businessmen are not all above reproach, but they spend more time discussing prices and quality than the size of their commissions.

Smuggling and the foreign currency blackmarket are disappearing, killed by economic liberalisation. Low-level corruption is on the wane (but big-time corruption is unfortunately on the increase). And banks are becoming more professional in assessing risks.

Better still are the signs of a cautious development of Algerian exports helped by the dinar devaluation — furniture, dates, fish, ceramics and small household appliances are beginning to cross the Mediterranean in the other direction. "For the first time in years, we have even transported Algerian wine to France," said a shipper.

Another symbol, the first private bank, the Union Bank, is due to open this month in Algiers. For many, optimism overrides the horror of the war. "If peace returns, there will be an extraordinary boom," says the head of the Marseilles Port Authority. He is even dreaming of Marseilles becoming Algeria's Hong Kong.

Some people have begun to prepare the ground. For the moment, there is no question of making direct investments in the country. But contacts are being forged, joint ventures are appearing in France and relay structures are being readied.

What about the FIS? The thought of it gaining power ceased to scare the business community a long time ago. What's worrying is the violence. A firm of consultants recently offered to put the big corporations in touch with Algeria's "future decision-makers" by arranging a "meeting of investors" in a Paris suburb. But, in the end, it was called off.

(October 4)

Police, accompanied by the killer's step-grandmother, examine his stepfather's car PHOTO: FRANCOIS MORI

The boy who terrorised a town

On September 23, a quiet 16-year-old boy shot dead 14 people in his home town, then committed suicide. But why, asks **Dominique Le Guilledoux**

AT THE beginning of term, fellow pupils in his electrical engineering class at the Lycée Professionnelle Georges-Cisson in Toulon noticed a change in Eric Borel. A tall, fair-haired 16-year-old, he had been a self-effacing, obedient and conscientious student who tended to keep himself to himself.

After spending the summer holidays in Limoges, he had become more talkative and livelier. He started sitting at the back of the class next to the dark good-looking Alan, who came from the town of Cuers, near Eric's home village of Solliès-Pont. The complete opposite of Eric, Alan was a fun-loving, extrovert and musical lad with an eye for the girls and the gift of the gab.

Teachers had become used to Eric's way of looking as if he were, or wanted to be, elsewhere. At first they were intrigued and asked him questions to check whether he had been listening. He had. In fact he was expected to do well, pass his professional *baccalauréat* and perhaps even go on to greater things.

"True, Eric didn't talk much, but then there are dozens of boys like him," says headmaster Roger Decoubis. He would not say anything unless he were asked a question. During gym classes, he did the exercises he was told to, and did his bit in the rugby scrum "with no great relish, but without being one of the softies", according to his PE teacher. He wrote good essays, which showed "he had ideas and could express them", says his French teacher.

Every morning Eric would watch his friend Alan send the whole class into fits of laughter as he turned up late, each time with a different improbable excuse that made even teachers smile. Alan played in two pop groups, the Black Dolphins, which he founded in Cuers, and in La Musique Du Gapeau, named after the river that flows through Solliès-Pont.

"Through Alan, Eric came into contact with the other boys in his class," says his form master. "And he was sometimes just as exuberant as the rest of them. He certainly wasn't left out of things."

This term, everyone was taken aback when Eric wolf-whistled at one of the female supervisors, something he would never have dreamt of doing in the past. And he even skipped two gym lessons. "When I asked him if he could justify his absence," says his gym master, "he simply replied, 'No.' Last year, he would have gone to tremendous lengths to excuse himself. I was surprised at the venom with which he said the word 'no'." Eric skipped another half-day on September 22, the day before everything went so terribly wrong.

Eric lived on the edge of Solliès-Pont, at a spot called Les Ayguiers, where a track runs along the foot of a scrub-covered hill. It is a peaceful place with reed-beds and fig trees.

Every morning he walked along the track with his stepfather, Yves Bichet. Neighbours say that Eric kept his eyes trained on the ground, and that the two never talked to each other.

HIS MOTHER Marie-Jeanne was "quite a character", well known in the village. A dark, energetic little Corsican woman of 36, she was known as a generous-hearted person, always ready to help, even when no one expected her to.

She had started going to church regularly some years ago and became a volunteer worker for the Secours Catholique charity. She was apparently relieved at being allowed to take communion once more, after a stormy divorce.

Marie-Jeanne was perceived as a happy woman, but the opposite was true. "She was someone who was in such a state of distress she couldn't recognise it herself," says a parishioner who knew her well. "She took refuge in hyperactivity. She devoted herself heart and soul to her good works because generosity was what kept her going."

She was equally energetic in politics, giving enthusiastic support at last June's local elections to André Duhamel, a successful "independent" candidate on a list called "Solliès first!" (the phrasing of the slogan bore the hallmark of the far-right National Front).

She was always prepared to put in a spell of duty at Duhamel's headquarters or whip up the support of people in the street as she went around chanting "Vote Duhamel, vote Duhamel!"

Marie-Jeanne was unstoppably talkative. "You just had to tell her to shut up," remembers another Secours Catholique worker. "But she'd start talking again. She'd tell you everything down to the tiniest detail — how her mother in Corsica ironed a shirt, how she fell down the stairs, what she told the butcher that morning. There was no end to it."

She also had very rigid ideas about how to bring up children. "This is the way I do it," she would announce, raising the palm of her hand. "If they step out of line, they get a couple of slaps in the face."

She was always handing out advice and venturing opinions, and occasionally had to be called to order when she went over the top — about immigrants in particular.

Her son, Eric, went to Limoges every summer to stay with his paternal grandparents. He liked going there because he could get away from it all. Although his father lived in the area, he did not see him. He preferred the company of his grandparents, who had looked after him when he was small.

When Eric was born, his mother was in the army and his father in the navy. They were young, and soon separated. Marie-Jeanne found herself alone with a baby, so she entrusted him to her parents-in-law.

She came back to claim Eric a few years later, after a court granted the grandparents visiting rights. Eric's father regularly paid alimony, but was careful to keep out of sight and out of mind. Then Marie-Jeanne met Bichet and had another child, Jean-Yves. So Eric grew up in the company of a half-brother, a stepfather and his mother, with his real father alive but absent.

Some inhabitants of Solliès-Pont thought Eric, too, was alive but absent. Until the recent tragic events one of Marie-Jeanne's women friends did not even know of Eric's existence: "She hid him from us. She never mentioned him. I thought she had only one child."

Another woman remembers Eric accompanying his mother to market. Marie-Jeanne had explained that she wanted her son to go into the army, while at the same time constantly repeating: "But what on earth am I going to do with him?"

Last year, Eric decided that his father "had died of cancer", a fabrication he confided to a fellow *lycée* pupil. He also said he was fed up with living at Solliès-Pont, with doing the washing up and putting out the garbage, with being called every name under the sun.

"I'd like to kill two or three of them," he is reported to have said, according to evidence gathered by police. His stepfather had taught him how to use a .22 rifle. Eric practised by taking pot-shots at sparrows from his bedroom window.

A former solicitor's clerk, his stepfather had just found a job as an accountant after being unemployed for a time. His mother was coming to the end of her contract at the town hall, which she had obtained under a government assistance scheme, and was hoping to get it renewed.

Eric had drawn a swastika and an SS sign on the wall of his bedroom in between posters of hard rockers, photographs of cars and calendar pinups. He liked reading books about the second world war and often watched a video about the massacre of the Waco sect by US security forces in 1993. His other cassettes included Terminator, The Silence Of The Lambs and The Longest Day.

At school he was friendly with pupils of North African origin, and no one thought he could really have been a serious neo-Nazi. "He was a nice person," says his form master. "We thought he was beginning to come out of his shell."

ON SATURDAY, September 23, the quiet young boy shot his stepfather and half-brother dead with the .22. The same fate awaited his mother when she returned from mass. After their death, he bludgeoned them with "a blunt instrument", then cleaned up the blood and hid their bodies under sheets.

The police think he spent the whole night wandering through the countryside before turning up at Alan's home in Cuers at 7.30 on Sunday morning. Alan is reported to have said to his mother, who had expressed surprise at such an early visit: "He's got problems, you know, he needs to talk."

The two teenagers apparently had a long conversation in the garden. Eric was carrying a bag. Alan wanted to go back into the house, after seeming to refuse a suggestion by his friend. As soon as he turned his back, Eric shot him dead.

Eric then wandered through the town. He calmly took aim and shot anyone who crossed his path — women, children, young and old — sometimes coming back to finish off his victims if they were still moving.

Eric's walk lasted some 30 minutes. He killed 10 people and wounded five. Police who approached him said that he seemed almost surprised to be still alive, that he expected someone to shoot him. He killed himself in front of the secondary school.

The bag he had left near Alan's house was found to contain clothes, fishing hooks, a dagger, some money and a map of Limoges, the only place where he really felt at home.

(October 6)

Ukraine faces a future of austerity

Natalie Nougayrède in Kiev

AFTER a stormy session on October 11, the Ukrainian parliament adopted Prime Minister Yevgeny Marchuk's austerity programme, which pledges to continue gradual economic reform. The vote eased recent tensions and averted a threat by Communist deputies to bring down the government with a vote of no confidence.

But the go-ahead given to reform by a parliament dominated by "conservatives" (Communists, Socialists and members of the Peasant Party) cannot conceal the slowness of economic change in Ukraine, a country of 52 million people.

Forced to give in to pressure from an industrial lobby accustomed to state handouts, Marchuk won parliamentary support for his programme only by promising help to Ukrainian producers and watering down earlier pledges to reduce state intervention in the economy.

Almost a year after the announcement by Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma of a sweeping programme of economic reform, targets have been scaled down. Because inflation has not been curbed, the launch of Ukraine's new national currency, due this month, has had to be postponed until next year.

The programme of "major privatisations" has run out of steam. Out of the 8,000 enterprises listed by the government at the beginning of the year, only 237 have been privatised. The reform process suffered a further blow recently when parliament withdrew the whole agro-industrial sector from the privatisation programme — a sector which accounts for almost half the economic wealth of a country once described as "the USSR's granary". Foreign capital has made only a timid appearance in Ukraine. Investment so far totals $500 million, nowhere near as much as the $4.5 billion of inward investment in Russia.

Ukraine is lagging far behind its central European neighbours and Russia in its transition to a market economy. Reasons for the delay include bureaucratic inertia, institutional paralysis, and above all internal dissensions, which almost caused a split between the pro-Russian east of the country and the nationalist west during the presidency of Leonid Kravchuk (1991-94), who took a tough line against Moscow.

Since succeeding Kravchuk in June 1994, Kuchma has taken the heat out of contentious issues such as the Black Sea fleet, Crimea and Ukraine's energy, debt, while skilfully playing the double card of economic co-operation with Russia and a rapprochement with the west. IMF loans to Ukraine this year (the third $350 million tranche of a standby loan has just been granted) form the keystone of Kuchma's reforms.

These are encouraging signs. So as not to discourage western finance, the government has pledged to stick to a strict monetary policy in the hope of bringing inflation down to 2.4 per cent in 1996.

Leaders on the left think dissatisfaction among pensioners and low-paid miners could result in "an autumn of discontent". Meanwhile, a new class of young Mercedes-driving entrepreneurs with cellular phones has joined the scene.

(October 12)

Seeing Cézanne in his true colours

Philippe Dagen reports on a major exhibition in Paris which traces the development of the philosopher-painter



La Montagne Sainte-Victoire, 1885, one of four versions of this landmark near Cézanne's native Aix

WHAT is the right word to describe Paul Cézanne? The first that comes to mind at the current exhibition of 170 works at the Grand Palais in Paris is violence — a nervy violence whose extravagant excesses are interspersed with fits of melancholy.

In the rooms that follow, Cézanne's painting becomes a rationale whose only purpose is to serve its opposite: an elusive and changing sensation. In these first rooms, the eye is not suprised; in each work, it is faced with the end-product of a fully apparent logic. *Then, at a certain* point in the proceedings, in the gallery devoted to drawings and watercolours, a curious phenomenon takes place. Up to then, you thought you understood; now you do not understand anything any more.

Each new painting is at once obvious and mysterious, incontrovertible and inexplicable — which is not the same thing as hermetic. Indeed it is the opposite of hermetic: there seems to have been no problem with the execution of these paintings, their composition seems straightforward and their motif unequivocal. The word that comes to *mind here is serenity, or lightness,* or grace — a miraculous and inexorable success.

From the 1880s on, each time Cézanne took a piece of paper or a canvas — whether he restricted himself to a few pencil strokes or spent considerable time working from nature with his paint-box, whether he painted a portrait of his wife or a group of women bathers in a wood — he was simply incapable of getting it wrong. He could only create a new perfection: he knew exactly where a line should end, exactly when a dash of watercolour should be added, and just how far he *should* "push" a *painting.*

All this leaves one in a curiously enervated and almost stupefied state, which is reinforced by the realisation that anyone who achieved what Cézanne did can rightfully stand alongside Titian and Rembrandt in the pantheon of art. Cézanne could try anything, since everything he tried was a success.

Cézanne knew that, and sometimes made remarks to friends, which in the mouth of anyone else might seem far-fetched. In a letter to Ambroise Vollard, his dealer, he wrote: "I am working unrelentingly, I can glimpse the Promised Land. Will I be like the great leader of the Hebrews, or will I be able to enter it?" The rhetorical question was for form's sake. By 1903, when he wrote those lines, he had already entered the promised land of painting.

He entered it as a prophet and lived there in hermit-like isolation. Early on in the exhibition, whenever the paintings allow one a moment of respite, another nagging question presents itself: how was it possible that "they" should have remained blind for so long? By "they" I mean virtually all his contemporaries, apart from a few painters like Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, Gauguin and Degas.

His childhood friend, the novelist Emile Zola, regretted Cézanne's "abortive genius". Selection committees rejected the pictures he submitted to the Salon. Critics derided the few he showed at exhibitions by the Impressionist group.

Cézanne had his first one-man *show only in 1895, when he was 56.* And although it earned him disciples, it also triggered another flurry of fatuous sarcasm: his jugs looked off-balance, his trees leant too much, his women bathers were simply unacceptable.

Such critics must have been blind not to appreciate, for example, the extraordinary use of colour so evident in the present admirable exhibition — the way in which Cézanne's colours subdivide into a series of shades that range from pitch-dark shadow to transparent luminosity, with each shade well separated from those surrounding it *because the brushstrokes are juxta*posed but do not merge into each other.

Cézanne, more than any other Impressionist, constructs chromatic harmonies of prodigious richness. Shadow in a ravine is rendered by interwoven greens, browns, violets, reddish greys and dark blues.

The trunk of a pine tree consists of juxtapositions of purple, violet, blood-red and pink; its foliage draws on the full range of greens, from the yellowest to the bluest, as well as touches of ochre and even orange, at the point where a shaft of sunlight falls from the sky. Nothing, not the most delicate Monet or most exquisite Degas, can rival the beauty and voluptuousness of Cézanne's colours.

But it would be wrong to think that his use of colour sets out merely to attract. It analyses the motif, or more accurately, it is all the more attractive because it is based on a constantly renewed understanding of nature.

Cézanne did not paint Cézannes. He mistrusted ready-made solutions and repetition. He deliberately eschewed jejune shortcuts, simplistic stereotypes, meretricious rhetoric or any system that took no account of the infinite variety of the physical world in its relationship with time.

The decision by the organisers of the exhibition to arrange the paintings in the most accurate chronological order possible (which remains imprecise because Cézanne did not to date his paintings) proves *my point: however close together* they may be in their time of execution, two landscapes painted on the same spot — Pontoise, for example, or the Bibémus quarry, or Fontainebleau forest — do not bring into play identical pictorial devices. They differ depending on the time of year, the viewpoint chosen, the intensity of the sunlight, the depth of the space depicted and the degree to which it is filled.

Four versions of the Montagne Sainte-Victoire, seen from the top of a hill that overlooks a plain divided up into fields and traversed by a viaduct, are hung on a single wall of *the exhibition. The comparison thus* afforded completely demolishes the theory that there exists a Cézanne style with its own unchanging rules.

The four versions display four ways of painting; and within each of them the brushstroke technique and interpretative approach differ depending on the various elements involved. In other words, Cézanne adjusts his art to his subject. The same is true of his portraits, nudes and still lifes.

THIS diversity of pictorial treatment corresponds to the changeability of nature. *Sometimes his drawing relies on a* proliferation of short curves, sometimes on straight lines. One moment he edges ever closer to the outline with a succession of approximations, the next he proceeds allusively, leaving gaps and breaking up the line.

Watercolour may occupy a whole surface or be applied only to certain areas as a means of emphasis. Although mostly fluid and diaphanous, it can sometimes, through an accumulation of colours, almost take on the density of oils.

In Cézanne's oil paintings, there is an even greater variety of movements and signs. Any attempt to set forth general rules is doomed from the start, as the painter himself always warned his correspondents and those who saw themselves as his disciples. He refused to do more than offer up a few vague maxims, such as his advice in 1904: "You have to see your model properly, *and have a precise feeling; and you* have to express yourself with distinction and force. Taste is the best judge. It is rare."

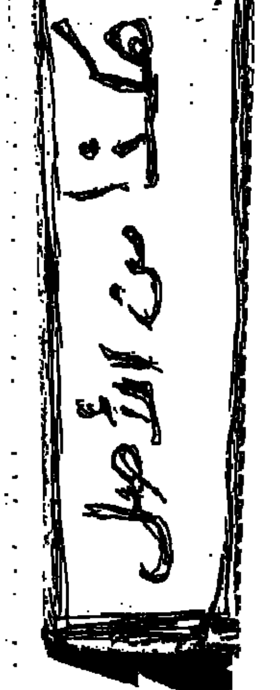
Another lesson of the exhibition is encapsulated in the words "express yourself with distinction and force". A discerning understanding of the subject — what Cézanne called "feeling" — cannot be separated from expression, that is to say the suggestion, through form and colour, of an emotion and a meaning.

It was long taken for granted that the still lifes, portraits and landscapes were "pure painting", in which the subject itself mattered little: *Cézanne was blazing a trail for* abstraction — or so claimed formalist American art historians. Little attention was paid to the fact that he had spent his dark and stormy youth under the influence of Delacroix, Baudelaire, Flaubert and Courbet. And on the evidence of the paintings themselves, that received view does not stand up.

The works of his younger years reveal a man who had read Flaubert's La Tentation de St Antoine and Baudelaire's Les Fleurs du Mal. The arrangements of fruit with beautifully rounded shapes placed on white napkins crumpled like bedclothes are *desire that has taken shape, desire* that has turned into drawing and harmonies of yellow and red.

If one takes the trouble to look long and hard at such paintings, they betray their admirable indecency, an indecency even more intense than the more overt version to be found in Cézanne's erotic variations on the Olympia and Lutte d'Amour themes. Very little separates those paintings from the most carnal representations of women bathers — as little as stands between allusion and confession.

Towards the end of the exhibition, we come at last to Cézanne's white-boned skulls with ochre and *grey* eye sockets. These admirable and impassive conceits come as a final reminder that Cézanne the philosopher told "the truth in painting".



The show of a century

Françoise Cachin, the exhibition organiser, talks to **Emmanuel de Roux**

WHY CÉZANNE rather than Van Gogh or Monet, who have never had a general retrospective in Paris?

There was a big Van Gogh retrospective in Amsterdam in 1990, and there have been extensive Monet shows. But there had been no comprehensive Cézanne exhibition since 1936. This year is also the centenary of his first major show.

Were there any surprises in organising loans?

Like all major retrospectives, the Cézanne was organised in collabo*ration with other museums* — the London Tate Gallery and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. They each own a version of Les Grandes Baigneuses. The idea was to bring together both versions.

Three museums are more effective in securing loans than one. I was pleased to get several works from private American, German and French collections, and to find our Russian colleagues extremely helpful.

An unpleasant surprise was a blanket refusal by the Bührle Foundation. And the statutes of the Barnes Foundation prevented it from once again lending its Cézannes, which *were shown in Paris in 1993.*

Is it true that patronage plays an increasingly crucial role in financing such a major exhibition?

In the case of a show like the Cézanne, it represents 20 to 25 per cent of our overall budget of 21 million francs (£2.7 million), a third of which is swallowed up by insurance. The national museums authority budget is not large enough to enable us to put on a show on this scale without outside help.

What about by-products such as the "Cézanne dress" modelled *by Claudia Schiffer?*

The issue of such products is not our responsibility. One of our patrons, Dior, used Cézanne's colours for the dress you mention. We've restricted ourselves to a modest line of products — some porcelain and fabrics. It's very little compared with the avalanche of books, 60 in all, that outside publishers have brought out or reissued.

I'm surprised by the enormous media enthusiasm for the show, for Cézanne is a painter whose early works are rather inaccessible and austere, and whose mature output is highly inventive but even more diffi*cult. He remains a mystery.* Cézanne belongs to the golden legend of Impressionism. If visitors insist on looking at him from that perspective, they will be disappointed: he is not an Impressionist painter.

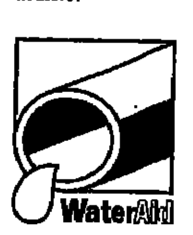
Cézanne, Grand Palais, Paris. Closed Tuesday. Until January 7, The London Tate Gallery (February 7-April 28) and the Philadelphia Museum of Art (May 26-August 18) (September 29)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

WaterAid is an independent charity working with people in developing countries to improve their quality of life through lasting improvements to water, sanitation and hygiene using local skills and practical technologies.

Charity Registration No 288701



OVERSEAS POLICY AND EVALUATIONS MANAGER

LONDON BASED (£16,490 – £20,160)

WaterAid has funded village level water supply and sanitation projects throughout Africa and Asia since 1982. We now seek an experienced and committed person, based in London, to co-ordinate support to our teams in the UK and overseas in developing project planning, monitoring and evaluation methodologies.

You will need:

- a minimum of two years' overseas experience in community-based development work
- relevant degree in anthropology, sociology or equivalent
- considerable experience in assessing, monitoring and evaluating community-based projects
- excellent organisation and communication skills
- a commitment to WaterAid's ethos and work

In return WaterAid offers a challenging and stimulating post with an attractive remuneration package. WaterAid has a no smoking at work policy.

In the first instance please contact Suba Shivanathan Beasty for an information pack.
WaterAid, 1 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9BT.
Tel: (00 44) 171 233 4800. Fax: (00 44) 171 233 3161.
Closing date: Wednesday 29 November 1995.
Interviews: London, week beginning 11 December.

THE UNIVERSITY of MANCHESTER

Chair in the Institute for Development Policy and Management

Applications are invited for a newly established Chair, which is designed to give intellectual leadership in the Institute as it becomes restructured within the University and proceeds with a strategy to recruit a new generation of academic staff.

The person appointed to the post will have established an international reputation for research and publications in the field of either development policy and management or development studies, and have substantial research, consultancy or working experience in Africa or Asia.

Further details can be obtained from the Director of Personnel, University of Manchester, Manchester, M13 9PL (Tel: 0161 275 2028, Fax: 0161 275 2221). Quote ref. 304/95. Closing date for applications is 24 November 1995.

As an Equal Opportunities Employer, the University welcomes applications from suitably qualified people from all sections of the community, regardless of race, religion, gender or disability.

Promoting quality teaching and research.

POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

a leading centre for teaching & research

FACULTY OF TECHNOLOGY

PROFESSOR AND HEAD OF SCHOOL OF ELECTRONIC, COMMUNICATION AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Salary will be within the professorial range

Applications are invited for the posts of Professor, and Professor and Head, following the promotion of the former Head to the post of Pro-Vice Chancellor at the Manchester Metropolitan University. The School is one of the six constituent Schools of the Faculty of Technology. It has responsibility for over 500 students and achieved a 3 rating in the last Research Selectivity Exercise.

For these key roles, the Faculty requires people with outstanding academic and research records and with proven interpersonal and management skills.

Informal enquiries are welcome and can be made to Professor R J Cope on 01752 233300.

Closing date: Wednesday 8 November 1995.

For further details and an application form call 01752 232168 or write (quoting post reference: 1680/TECH and title) to:

The Personnel Department, University of Plymouth, Drake Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AA.

Promoting equal opportunities

Learn to Teach English in Cairns, Australia

at International House Teacher Training Centre



RSA/Cambridge Certificate courses

Contact
Simon Bradley
International House Queensland
Box 7368,
Cairns 4870,
Qld. Australia

Fax: (070) 313464
Phone: (070) 313466

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

Romania

SCF works to achieve lasting benefits for children within communities in which they live and endeavours to make children's rights a reality all over the world. SCF has a long tradition of relief work through which it aims to contribute to long-term development and the establishment of sustainable services.

You will be responsible for management and development of the Fund's programme in Romania and for ensuring that SCF is effective in meeting the needs of children within the framework of agreed strategy. The initial work involves development of a juvenile justice programme in Romania and the identification of other programmes within SCF'S priority programme themes for Central Eastern Europe.

You will provide overall professional and technical support to this programme and guide the development of initiatives. This will involve management of financial, personnel and material resources necessary for effective programme implementation and representing SCF to government, partner agencies, NGOs and other bodies including the media and the public.

In addition, you will also be expected to maintain an active watching brief on Bulgaria visiting as necessary to assess the situation of children in that country.

A minimum of 4 years of relevant senior management experience of development programmes is essential; in-depth experience and knowledge of development issues including juvenile justice reform and poverty alleviation; strong research, analytical, representational and interpersonal skills; proven ability to work in difficult situations; and willingness to learn Romanian and Bulgarian.

Based in Bucharest, the post involves extensive travel throughout Romania, visits to Bulgaria and elsewhere in the region.

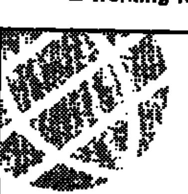
The post is initially offered for a 19 month period and has accompanied status. Salary for the post is £21,202 p.a. (rising to £22,996 p.a.) which should be tax free. In addition there is a generous benefits package including flights, accommodation and other living expenses.

For further information and an application form please contact: Central and Eastern Europe Division, Save the Children, Cambridge House, Cambridge Grove, London W6 0LE. Phone: 0181 741 4058, Fax: 0181 741 4505.

Closing Date: 1 December 1995.

SCF aims to be an equal opportunities employer.





Project Manager, Tanzania

18 month contract Based in Ngara, Tanzania

Salary: £14,870 p.a. (UK non-taxable)

Oxfam is responding to the influx of Rwandan refugees in Ngara District principally in the provision of water supply. We are seeking a Project Manager to oversee and manage the Ngara District Refugee Project in Tanzania. You will represent Oxfam at a local and national level, and in collaboration with other country team members plan future strategies in the district.

You will need good management skills, excellent communication skills and an understanding of emergency response strategies. You will also be able to work well as a member of a multi-cultural team.

Oxfam's comprehensive benefits package includes medical cover, pension scheme, life assurance, personal accident, permanent health, personal effects and evacuation cover.

Ideally you will be able to take up the post in early January 1996.

For further details please send a SAE to:

Overseas Personnel and Development Department, Oxfam, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ. Fax: 01865 313819.
Please quote ref: OS/PM/TAN/GW.
Closing date: 17th November 1995.
Interview date: To be arranged.

Oxfam works with poor people in their struggle against hunger, diseases, exploitation and poverty in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East through relief, development, research and public education.



Oxfam UK/Ireland is striving to be an equal opportunity employer

SA TRANSPORT ENVIRONMENT SENIOR MANAGER

FLEET MAINTENANCE/FLEET PLANNING

A golden opportunity for an Engineer Graduate to repatriate to South Africa and join a successful multi million rand transport company.

The ideal candidate will have a Bsc Engineering (Mechanical/Electrical/Industrial) degree, an MBA and will have had 10 - 20 years experience in the rail transport equipment maintenance and/or life - cycle management environment.

The successful candidate will be involved in the management of the fleet maintenance operation and/or fleetlife cycle function.

This is an opportunity for an energetic committed black expatriate South African engineer to play a significant role in the SA development of the transport system into the 21st Century.

A brilliant package commensurate with qualifications and experience will be negotiated.

Contact Lumka
PO Box 32265
Braamfontein, 2017
Tel: (011) 403-7730
Fax: (011) 339-7398

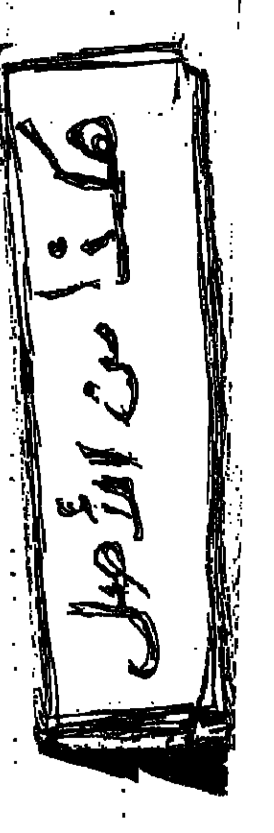
DIPLOMA COURSES in COMPLEMENTARY HEALTH THERAPIES
Home Study Programmes in Stress Therapy, Aromatherapy, Nutrition, Yoga Teaching, etc
INTERNATIONAL YOGA SCHOOL
Founded 1990
Dept. G, P. O. Box 23 Torquay Devon TQ2 8YE England
Tel. or Fax: +44-1803-324516

On October 29th 1995 The Guardian Weekly will be publishing a special feature on:

Academic Posts & Courses

For details of advertising rates and deadlines please contact the Sales team on:

Tel: +44 (0) 161-834-8686
Fax: +44 (0) 161-839-4436



The atom-bomb scientist who said no

Edward Pilkington, Jonathan Steele and Greg McIvor in Stockholm

A *LITTLE-KNOWN* British scientist who helped to develop the first atomic bomb and has spent 40 years campaigning against nuclear weapons was propelled into instant global stardom last week when he was awarded the $1 million (£635,000) Nobel Peace Prize.

Polish-born Joseph Rotblat, aged 86, who lives in London, said he was overwhelmed to receive the award. "I read in the papers that our prime minister was going to get it. He's a big name, I thought, while no one has ever heard of me."

The prize makes Professor Rotblat the equal of such illustrious figures as Theodore Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama. But he was modest, both about himself and about the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, the group of anti-nuclear scientists of which he is president and with which he will share the prize.

"Many more people in this country know about Captain Pugwash than about us," he said at the campaign's offices in central London. Gesturing at the worn carpet and peeling wallpaper, he added: "It's not quite what you would expect of a world organisation. We've been quite lonely all these years."

Prof Rotblat is the only survivor of a group of 11 scientists who came together 40 years ago to raise awareness of the nuclear threat. The two most prominent members, Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein, launched the campaign in 1955 by composing a joint manifesto inspired by the horror of the hydrogen bomb.

In the manifesto, which Einstein signed hours before his death, they argued that scientists must come down from their ivory towers and make a moral stand against the new weapons of mass destruction.

The appeal was sent to the White House and the Kremlin but had no immediate effect. On the back of it the scientists launched Pugwash as an international conference of delegates with no formal membership that has met virtually every year since.

PROF ROTBLAT'S engagement with the nuclear issue began with atomic physics research he conducted in his native city, Warsaw. He moved to Liverpool in 1939 and five years later was recruited into the Manhattan Project, developing the first nuclear weapon, in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

"At that time I was very afraid that if Germany developed the bomb Hitler would have no hesitation using it. But when it became clear that the Germans would not have a weapon ready by the end of the war I became disillusioned."

In December 1944 Prof Rotblat became the only scientist to quit the Manhattan Project. He returned to Britain, where he took British nationality two years later, and was barred from re-entering the United States until 1964.

The recognition by the secretive five-member Nobel committee in Oslo of Prof Rotblat and Pugwash signifies the return of the nuclear debate to the top of the international agenda. It was the first peace prize to be won by the disarmament cause since 1985.

Officially, the committee said the award had been inspired by Prof Rotblat and Pugwash's "efforts to diminish the part played by nuclear arms in international politics". But it made no attempt to disguise the fact that the decision also contained a note of anger at the resumption of French nuclear testing in the Pacific.

Meanwhile, congratulations flooded in for the Nobel laureate from around the world.

The most flattering comment, however, remains that made by Bertrand Russell, who predicted before he died that Prof Rotblat would win the peace prize. Referring to nuclear weapons, he said: "If ever these evils are eradicated, his name should stand very high indeed among the heroes."

Rotblat: overwhelmed

CLASSIFIED

CAR HIRE

THE CAR HIRE SPECIALISTS — CLIENTS FROM OVER 100 COUNTRIES
MARTINS Selfdrive
FREE 24 HOUR PERSONAL COURIER DELIVERY*

Group	Model	7 days	14 days	21 days	28 days +
A	Polo 1.1	105	193	290	349
B	Golf 1.4	140	252	370	347
C	Golf Estate 1.8	165	304	455	528
E	Passat Saloon 1.8	180	331	497	576
E1	Audi A4 1.8	215	396	593	688
F	Passat Estate 1.8	185	340	511	592
W	Golf Gti	223	410	614	712

Cars under 6 months old - rates inclusive VAT, CDW, Insurance and Unlimited meleage. Full RAC and Windscreen cover
Quote Ref: WTW95/MSD
Tel: +44 1256 24448 Fax +44 1256 843035
Full brochure on request
*applicable to London Heathrow and Gatwick only

10% Special Discount Offer
Use this advertisement to obtain a 10% REDUCTION ON OUR BROCHURE RATES*
For a brochure please contact
WOODS CAR RENTAL
Sidlow Bridge (GW), Reigate, Surrey RH2 8PP
Tel: +44 1737 240291 Fax: +44 1737 249162
Also in London, Gatwick, Heathrow, Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow and Edinburgh
*This discount is not available on special or promotional rates

PAMBER CAR HIRE U.K. PHONE: +44 (0) 1734 442412
62 READING ROAD, WOODLEY, READING, RG5 3DB. FAX: +44 (0) 1734 696295
SEND PHONE OR FAX FOR A BROCHURE TODAY FOR FULL DETAILS
WE MEET YOUR FLIGHT AND YOU CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY WITHOUT DELAYS.

Group	Models	Weekly	Group	Models	Weekly
A	ROVER METRO / FORD FIESTA	£ 90	F	FORD SIERRA 1.6 ESTATE / PEUGEOT 405 ESTATE	£125
B	FORD ESCORT 1.4 / ROVER 214	£105	G	FORD MONDEO 1.8/2.0 LX / PEUGEOT 405 1.9 GR	£150
C	FORD ESCORT 1.3L ESTATE (OR SIMILAR)	£120	H	ROVER 620 SLI	£170
D	ROVER 416 & 216	£130	J	VOLVO ESTATE / FORD GRANADA ESTATE	£265
E	FORD MONDEO 1.6 / PEUGEOT 405	£130	K	ROVER 820 SLI	£210
S	ROVER 220 COUPE	£180			

WEEKLY RATE INCLUDES FULLY COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE AND UNLIMITED MILEAGE. CDW OPTIONAL. DISCOUNTS FOR LONG TERM. CHILD SEATS AND BOOSTERS AVAILABLE. FREE DELIVERY TO LONDON AIRPORTS ON HIRES OVER ONE WEEK. FULL RAC COVER. ALL RATES PLUS VAT. CREDIT CARD ACCEPTED.

Thrifty Car Rental
HIRE QUALITY, LOWER PRICES
- OFFICES AT ALL MAJOR AIRPORTS AND 35 MORE THROUGHOUT THE UK.
- FULLY INCLUSIVE RATES-NO HIDDEN EXTRAS ■ BRAND NEW VEHICLES
- FRIENDLY PERSONAL SERVICE ■ HUGE DISCOUNTS FOR EX-PATS

PLEASE TELEPHONE OR FAX THE NUMBERS BELOW OR WRITE TO THE ADDRESS SHOWN
TELEPHONE +44 (0) 1494 442110 FACSIMILE +44 (0) 1494 474732
THRIFTY CAR RENTAL, THE OLD COURTHOUSE, HUGHENDEN ROAD, HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, HP13 5DT, ENGLAND

ACCESS CAR HIRE U.K. Tel: +44 (0) 1734 452214
Horncastle Garage Ltd Fax: +44 (0) 1734 451172
Bath Road, Reading, Berkshire RG23 2HS

SPECIAL OFFERS!!!
AVAILABLE ON ALL FIESTA AND ESCORT MODELS AND MONDEO 1.8 LX
PLEASE WRITE PHONE OR FAX FOR DETAILS.
EXAMPLE
ESCORT 1.4 FOR 2 WEEKS £247.00
FULL INCLUSIVE OF COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE, CDW, VAT, DEL/COLL TO HEATHROW, GATWICK OR LONDON

Flying into Heathrow? Your passport to the open road
REGENT CAR RENTAL
10 Bath Road, Heathrow, Middlesex TW6 2AA
Telephone: +44 181 759 4180
Facsimile: +44 181 759 4190

CAR RENTAL
Our rates are inclusive of VAT, CDW, Unlimited Mileage and full AA membership and meet and greet service at Airport terminals

	WEEKLY	DAILY 7+
PANDA/ CINQUECENTO	84.00	12.00
FIESTA /CORSA	98.00	14.00
MICRA/UNO	112.00	16.00
ESCORT/ASTRA	140.00	20.00
MONDEO/PRIMERA	154.00	22.00
7 SEATERS	315.00	45.00
RANGE ROVERS	525.00	75.00

HEATHROW-AUTOHIRE-GATWICK
THE VILLAGE GARAGE, HIGH STREET, DORMANSLAND, SURREY, RH7 6PY
TELEPHONE:-11 44 1342 833338
FAX:- 00 11 1342 832211

NEVER HIRE A CAR UNTIL YOU HAVE CHECKED KENDALL'S PRICES
200 Fine Cars, Vans, Estates, 7, 12 & 15-Seaters for Hire.
Airport Collection.
KENDALL CARS
34 Aldershot Rd., Guildford GU2 6AF
Tel: +44 1483 574434
Fax: +44 1483 34781

AEROLINK Rent-A-Car
- Professional Management
- Late Model Vehicles
- Free In-Terminal Delivery Service to Gatwick & Heathrow (Heathrow 5 days min)
- Out of Hours Service at no Extra Cost

All this and more plus Unbeatable Rates eg

Make/Model	Daily	Weekly
Ford Fiesta 1.1L	£20.00	£133.00
Ford Escort 1.3/1.4 L/LX	£23.00	£152.95
Ford Mondeo 1.6/1.8 L/LX	£27.00	£179.55
Ford Sierra Estate 1.8 L/LX	£27.50	£182.88

Our rates are ABSOLUTELY FULLY INCLUSIVE of VAT. Full Insurance, CDW, Unlimited Mileage and AA Breakdown Cover. For Truly Personal Service & Immediate Quotation, Call or Write:
7 Crompton Way, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 2QR (GATWICK)
+44 1293-403-123 or Fax +44 1293-403-007

NEW CARS: OLD PRICES HEATHROW/GATWICK
- Personal meet & greet service
- Discounts for expats & diplomats
- Unlimited mileage
- Full 24 hr AA & RAC cover
- Visa/Access accepted

County
Contact us for fully inclusive rate
58 Meadow, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3HT UK
Tel +44 1483 860046
Fax +44 1483 860187

To place your advertisement
Tel: +44(0) 161 834 8686
or
Fax: +44(0) 161 839 4436

SERVICES

SEND CHRISTMAS PRESENTS - *THE EASY WAY*
Let us wrap and post your gifts to friends and relatives in the UK. Order now from an extensive selection of beautifully illustrated books, entertaining and informative games, and CD-Roms. Ideal presents for all ages. Save the time cost and worry of posting gifts from overseas. For your free catalogue contact.
Alison Bryson, Independent Distributor, Dorling Kindersley Family Library, PO Box 87, Amersham, Bucks. HP6 6TB, UK
Fax (44) 1494 728700

Barbour
THE BEST BRITISH CLOTHING FOR THE WORST BRITISH WEATHER
EST. 17 YEARS
FREE MAIL ORDER BROCHURE
TEL & FAX (+44) 01628 29283
Kings of Maidenhead
18 RAY STREET, MAIDENHEAD
BERKSHIRE SL6 8PW, U.K

Out of Print books English and U.S
Found and sent worldwide. A Helpful and efficient service with no search fees and no obligation. Write, fax or phone with your wants.
Caroline Hartley Booksearch
2 Hoole Street, Chesterfield, England S41 0AR
Tel/Fax: +44 1246 558481

UK BOOK PUBLISHER
Invites Authors to send manuscripts for publication under Alternative Bookplan. A practical, low cost, on demand system. We are experienced in all categories, including academic and specialized publication to the highest standards.
MERLIN BOOKS LTD (G.W.)
Braunton, Devon EX33 2NA England.
Tel: +44(0)1271 816430
Fax: +44 (0)1271 812117

Advertisements
It is a condition of acceptance of advertisement orders that the proprietors of The Guardian Weekly do not guarantee the insertion of any particular advertisement on a specified date, or at all, although every effort will be made to meet the wishes of advertisers; further they do not accept liability for any loss or damage caused by an error or inaccuracy in the printing or non-appearance of any advertisement. They also reserve the right to classify correctly any advertisement, edit or delete any objectionable wording or reject any advertisement.

Although every advertisement is carefully checked, occasionally mistakes do occur. We therefore ask advertisers to assist us by checking their advertisements carefully and advise us immediately should an error occur. We regret that we cannot accept responsibility for more than ONE INCORRECT insertion and that no republication will be granted in the case of typographical or minor changes which do not affect the value of the advertisement.

The Guardian Weekly

LONDON HOTELS & APARTMENTS




Self-contained, fully serviced apartments in Kensington - close to park, shops, buses and subways. Colour TV, telephone, equipped kitchen, central heating. Modern comfort at reasonable rates. Car Park. Brochure by return mail Quote G
CHALFONT (KENSINGTON) LTD
202 KENSINGTON CHURCH STREET, LONDON W8 ENGLAND
Tel: (0) 171 229 5371 (answafone) (0) 171 229 3055 Fax: (0) 171 727 7036
Telex: 262433 (ref /3564)

Make no bones about it

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

THE ODDISH thing about the grave of Ivarr the Boneless, if such it was, is that you never saw so many bones in your life. Two hundred and fifty skulls in rows, every eye socket facing forward, trestle tables white with bones, femurs and fibulas bundled like firewood. All dug up in Repton by Professor Martin Biddle and his wife, Birthe Kjolbye-Biddle. A grand name, especially with one of those Scandinavian sword strokes through the "o".

And talking of names . . . The one thing we all panted to know was why Ivarr was called Boneless. He was not, you felt, a limp king. It was Ivarr who is reputed to have torn out the lungs of the last king of Northumbria, a procedure called the blood eagle. This is the sort of rollicking yarn that **Evidence of Vikings** (Timewatch, BBC2) was at pains to deprecate.

Enlightened historical thinking is that the Vikings really only stopped by and quite liked the look of the place. Give or take a couple of skeletons, they soon proved to be "town planners and good solid citizens", as Dr Hill of the York Archeological Trust depressingly put it.

The Biddles, who found the bones buried in a vicarage garden, (the vicar, rallying, seized the opportunity to returf his lawn) have set their faces like stone against this interpretation. They believe the Vikings were literally larger than life. "People used to see Vikings as hugely attractive and exciting but that was before the new morality came in," said Mrs Biddle. Some of the leg bones they found were too big for the boxes provided by the Natural History Museum but Timewatch, the spoilsport, proved by carbon-14 dating that the biggest bones of all were pre-Viking. "Probably well-fed fat monks," said Professor Janet Nelson, who was getting visibly tetchy with the Biddles.

Danes were world-class name callers. It was a poor Dane who did not merit a deeply offensive nickname. They come down to us like a lion's breath, hot and reeking. Take Ragnarr Hairybreeks, probably the father of Ivarr the Boneless, who, you will hear with no surprise, was the father of Sigtrygg the Squinty.

They don't sound like town planners to me. An all-round bad egg like Egil was excused by Professor Jesse Byock of UCLA as a special case. He probably had a bone disease and, therefore, a splitting headache. I should think headaches were an occupational hazard for Vikings. Thorfinn Skullsplitter certainly handed out a few.

MICK BENSTED, who reminds you of Giant Haystacks, played Egil with commendable menace. I particularly enjoyed the scene in which he arrived bodily through the wall, leaving a Viking-shaped hole. For nine years Mick has spent every weekend playing Vikings. No, re-enacting. That's the preferred word, re-enacting. "I suppose," said Timewatch demurely, "you do it because you are very interested in historical authenticity?" "No," said Mick candidly. "I enjoy fighting." And there, surely, down a thousand years speaks the voice of Erik Bloodaxe.

"Cosy," she says. "Comforted," she says. "Cosseted." Here comes the cold and the dark and **Delia Smith's Winter Collection** (BBC2) and it'll be all right, children, if we keep tight hold of her hand.

Today she is teaching us to poach an egg: "The first ingredient you need is water." Perfectly sound. God started the world that way.

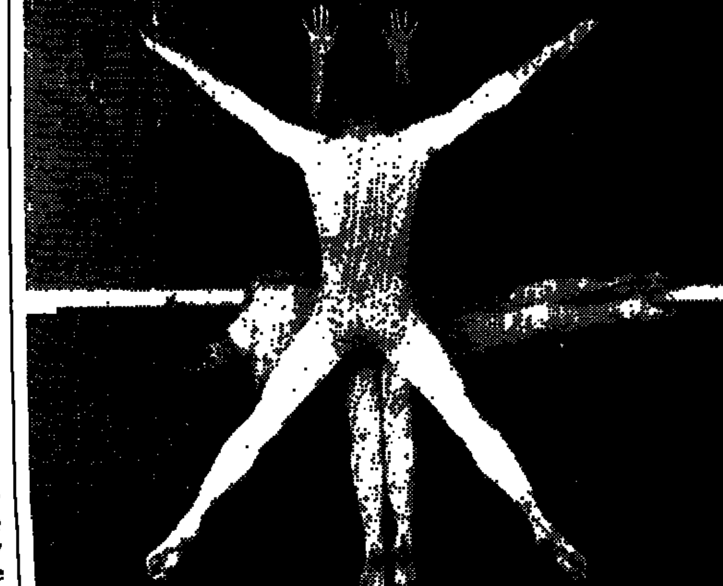
It is step by step with Miss Smith. Her vocabulary is nursery. "All you want is nice, toasted, frazzled edges . . . if you don't like the raggedy edges . . . take a wodge of kitchen paper . . . a lovely bit of squidge." Frazzled, raggedy, squidgy. Comfy.

Delia has a Japanese mandolin: "A wonderful little gadget. It slices really, really well, really, really fine and really, really quickly." The little freckled hands with their clear varnished nails moved confidently over the really, really sharp blade.

There was no uproar or profanity in Delia's kitchen.

Let the body talk

DANCE
Cherry Smyth



Streb's company leap through the crash barrier PHOTO: LOIS GREENFIELD

THREE BODIES hurl themselves forcefully from a scaffold, bounce rigidly on a trampoline, revolve sideways, falling flat bang on to the matted floor. Almost simultaneously three more have jumped and fly as if to smack headlong into one another, until one leaps and clings to the parallel bar overhead, another dive-bombs the floor and the third twists balletically out of danger, pouncing back to the scaffold frame.

My heart is in my mouth, hands hovering to cover my eyes, but I'm too fixated by the hair-splitting timing, vertiginous physical risks and disorientating visual field to stop looking. The last time I felt like this was watching Pulp Fiction.

New York choreographer Elizabeth Streb, aged 45, is to postmodern dance what Quentin Tarantino is to cinema, stripping away the narrative casing, breaking formal rules, exposing the guts of the genre with violent, percussive persistence. Unlike DV8 and V-Tol whose work is richly metaphorical, Streb does not seek to evoke anything other than a brisk vacillation between terror and awe, and a revelling in the pure mechanics of action "at the high end of physicality". While in another era she would have been a daredevil performer, part shaman, part Houdini, now she and her company, Ringside, tour the world with a distinct line in shattering limits and redetermining "gracefulness".

In Action Occupation — part of Dance Umbrella '95 — Streb packs more movement into a dense 10-minute piece than most dancers deliver in an entire evening. In Wall, six performers clash frenetically against an 8ft square of plexiglass, then roll back, charge and splat once more, crouch and assault the wall again, until they melt on top of one another in a comic heap.

Take popular Japanese endurance trials, blend with a non-narrative form of DV8 and top with Buster Keaton and you might come close to imagining Streb's superb movement style, which she dubs "pop action", rather than dance.

While most dance makes formal choices to camouflage gravity, Streb thoroughly investigates and defies the restraints it imposes. She also works to remove the traditional transitions between dance moves. "Normally they do step, step, leap and I say, if you really just want to do the leap, don't do the step."

If you expect dance, you'll be astounded. Expect music and you'll be confounded, for Streb believes that music is the enemy of movement and instead relies on contact microphones strategically placed to amplify the sound of the dancers hitting walls, collapsing sheets of plexiglass, and the clanking of their gyroscopic harnesses as they scale and propel against a 40ft wall. Without music cohering the movement and determining rhythm, the dancers have to be even more attuned to one another, acquiring the highly developed reflexes demanded by certain sports.

Trained in ballet and contemporary dance, Streb has pushed the boundaries of ideas on movement in the downtown New York experimental dance community for more than 20 years.

The nineties have brought an increased literacy for her work thanks to a growing culture of martial arts, body-building and gravity-teasing sports like bungee-jumping.

Streb has always fought to overcome physical limitations, to "go beyond the comfort zone, to stretch physicality beyond what's considered safe or potentially possible". She manages to capture that sudden plummeting sensation we experience before waking up with a jolt of terror.

Fear is carefully addressed in rehearsal and Streb reiterates that she does not accept her dancers saying "I won't do this". "I'll accept them saying 'I won't do this today, I'm really scared and I need to learn more about how to approach this move', an attitude which has forced comparisons with sado-masochism, with Streb playing the Marquis de Sade.

"Every human response is to go away from pain. I think that when I go towards it I find out new things, usually temporal, spatial and physical, but it goes beyond that. Some of it feels like pain at first and then once it's processed it becomes just a physical sensation that is not familiar," says Streb.

SHE DISCUSSES her work in elemental terms. "By isolating and harnessing some of these invisible forces and recognising them, we've been able to do moves that would have prompted anyone, either from gymnastics or dance, to say 'no, you can't do that'. It's shocking what's possible."

Most choreographers of 45 would have stopped dancing a long time ago and Streb is learning to bow out of the more gruelling pieces.

"I used to say to my company, 'Look, I can fall on my back, that board can land on me, watch!' Slam! But it's not practical now. They teach each other, and my directorial skills go in other areas."

Although the pieces have the look of improvisation, Streb has managed to choreograph everything so that no move is repeated. "Every move that's made, every way they turn, every place they go to wait is all part of the tangible sculptural space that is constantly in the act of disappearing."

Homage to Utopia

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

THE IDEA that the left's fight against Franco in Spain was defeated not by fascist powers but by Stalin's betrayal of true socialism is not one held by all those who took part in what was as much a civil war as a left-right struggle. But it is one espoused by George Orwell in Homage To Catalonia and by Ken Loach and Jim Allen in **Land and Freedom**.

This, if labels must apply, is a Trotskyite version of the thirties, struggle. Loach's most expensive and expansive film yet — a British, Spanish and German co-production — triumphantly does what it is supposed to do, which is to tell a half-forgotten but still revelatory story of our times in a way which personalises but does not trivialise it.

The film starts in present-day Liverpool where an old man dies and his granddaughter shuffles through his papers. This emotional device, full of Loach's familiar sure touches, is used to frame the story of a young man, roused by a Communist Party meeting, who volunteers to join the Republican struggle. To him, it's a fight between socialism and fascism. But he gradually begins to realise it is hardly as simple as that.

Armed only with antique rifles, he and his comrades from France, Ireland, America and Spain join the POUM militia to fight a messy, almost incoherent war. Soon he understands that the Republican cause is being betrayed by Stalin and groups like POUM are considered "social fascists".

Loach and Allen's depiction of both the war and the gradual betrayal is direct, passionate and informed by political conviction. The film posits the thought that politics is worth talking about, and causes are still worth arguing.

Needless to say, the cast, headed by Ian Hart as the young communist and Rosanna Pastor as the Spanish girl, possess the kind of acting ability that makes them look as if they are not acting at all. That is Loach's forte.

Perhaps this is why his film won a standing ovation at Cannes, though I rather think it is also because of his capacity to believe in causes which so many people now have either guiltily rejected or conveniently forgotten. Here, once again, is someone who still has the faith and is a formidable film-maker too. It is one of his most openly political films, not drily immersed in history but angrily so.

No one, in the words of ITMA's Mrs Mopp — a radio star Terence Davies would certainly remember — would exactly say that's it's being so cheerful as keeps him going. Yet most of Davies's films have their cheerful moments, even if they come securely fastened to his own view of the adult world's infinite capacity to hurt children and to render childhood something that can never be escaped completely. His first American film — more accurately the first film he has made in America, since **The Neon Bible** is British — doesn't alter our conception of him as a dark cinematic poet of childhood.

It is taken from John Kennedy Toole's teenage novella, set in Georgia but not a million miles away from the world of Davies's Liverpool. The novel's themes echo Davies's familiar concerns and the film's style is instantly recognisable. But is this going one step too far down roughly the same line? He has said he will stop using childhood to express his feelings about the world. But he's said that before and it hasn't worked out. One day, I hope, it will.

The boy at the centre of the story — played by Drake Bell, aged 10, and 15-year-old Jacob Tierney — is a sensitive and isolated soul with a father (Dennis Leary) who takes him to a Ku Klux Klan lynching and forces him to continue playing with bullies he can't fend off. His mother (Diana Scarwid) has little grip on reality and loses even that when her father is brought home dead from the second world war.

His own sanity is saved by feisty Aunt Mae (Gena Rowlands), who won't give up on the American Dream even though her career as a singer seems to be finished, until a musician comes to town and takes her away from the boy who has come to rely on her.

Mick Coulter's cinematography is a model of its kind but no one could pretend that this is a feelgood film.

Davies is capable of such strong empathy for his characters that you are almost forced to share it and to remember, by association, things about your own past reflected in them. But Davies, having made himself into one of world cinema's most cherishable talents, now has to reflect that perhaps a change is as good as a rest. He can afford breadth as well as depth of focus.



Glimpse of African splendour

ARTS
James Hall

IS IT a bench or is it a Brancusi? The object in question is one of the most startling exhibits in the Royal Academy's blockbuster-to-end-all-blockbusters — Africa: The Art Of A Continent. It comes from the Ngombe area of Zaire, and is made from an unspecified kind of wood.

The title is Five-Seated Stool. The "seats" are a series of five rectangular blocks of dark, shiny wood strung out in a long, straight line. Ribbed struts, about three inches long, bridge the gap between the blocks. Each block is about 13 inches long, eight inches wide and four inches deep, and has a concave cavity carved in the top. Scholars believe the contraption may have been a bench for judges, with the stools joined together to symbolise the judges' unanimity.

And what's so startling about that? In theory, relatively little. But in practice, a great deal. For the "five-seated stool" is not displayed horizontally, along the ground, as it should be, but vertically, like a totem-pole. It is also reproduced that way in the catalogue.

At a stroke, we no longer have a functional bit of furniture, a rudimentary prop for the collective arses of the local judiciary. Instead, we get a sleek piece of abstract sculpture — a free-standing, sky-scraping soul-mate of Brancusi's Endless Column.

No one in the West can see African art without seeing it through the distorting mirror of Modernism. Indeed, in another room there is a wicked-looking beaked bird from the Berggruen Collection that until recently stood surrounded by Berggruen's Picassos in the National Gallery.

Picasso first became interested in African art — a fair amount could be seen in ethnographic museums and private collections around Paris — as he was pioneering Cubism. He was immediately bowled over by the "sublime beauty" and the "passionate and rigorous logic" of this sculpture made by "the anonymous artist of Africa".

The German Expressionists, Matisse and Braque, were equally impressed by its unfussy forcefulness. Nonetheless, you would expect the RA to elaborate on the early 20th century view of African art, reflecting our greater knowledge. And to some extent they have. For the first time, many of the finest artefacts of the entire continent, ranging from ancient and Islamic Egypt to stone age and early 20th century South Africa, have been brought together under one roof. For the first time, we can appreciate the sheer variety of Africa's art. This in itself is an astonishing achievement (there are over 800 exhibits) and makes it essential viewing.

But in display terms, the curators, led by the artist and Royal Academician Tom Phillips, have been mystifyingly minimalist. All the objects are isolated by spotlights in otherwise darkened rooms. Initially, labels were banished from the display cases. You had to match a number — say, 5.128n — with a brown caption glued to a brown wall. These were hard to find, harder to read, and singularly uninformative. Long explanatory captions were provided for Poussin. But African art is expected to speak for itself.

The RA has now put labels in front of the objects. Even so, when you leave these galleries, gloomy beyond the call of conservation, the lingering feeling is that in 1995, as in 1895, Africa is the dark continent.

The exhibition is divided into seven sections. It kicks off with ancient Egypt, then moves anti-clockwise round the map. We end up in Islamic Cairo. A "prelude" section includes classic ethnographic objects such as ironstone hand axes that may be 1.5 million years old. They are among the first things made by Homo Erectus. But we're here to see art rather than archaeology, and after this primordial prelude, it's a beauty contest all the way.

AND WHAT could be lovelier than the standing torso of Queen Nefertiti — albeit limbless and headless? This fragment of quartzite is unusually naturalistic for Ancient Egyptian art. The pleats of Nefertiti's diaphanous dress fan out across her body like the shadows cast by super-fine blinds. The reddish-brown stone from which the torso is carved exudes a mellow warmth. Outside Egypt, wood is the main medium for African sculpture. So why, whenever stone or metal is used, are we told what type it is whereas wood is only ever "wood"? The answer is surely that stone and metal are the key media for post-Renaissance European sculpture, and wood (except in Germany) is despised.

Among many remarkable wood carvings, I was particularly taken by the high-backed Central African stools reserved for chiefs and their wives. The backs are anthropomorphic, often consisting of nothing but a carved figure. These were supposed to signify ancestors or local spirits. Their (literal) backing gave the chief, who was often a slave-trader, authority and legitimacy.

In the liveliest of these, a stick-insect figure clings to the curved back of the chair, his forearms and head poking round. He's both back-scratcher and bodyguard. The intricate zig-zag pattern on another stool makes the broad expanse of the chair-back tingle. A reptilian creature, shaped like an attenuated ice-cream cone, peers over the top. It seems intended to send exquisite shivers down your spine.

The RA has tried to be even-handed, giving space to east and South Africa, but it's the old favourite, west Africa, that steals the show. Many of the exhibits from Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana and the Ivory Coast are thrilling.

Sculptures don't come more alarming than those from Cameroon. There's a grinning king, gleefully clutching a sword and his enemy's severed head. What he's doing in the Walt Disney African Art Collection is anyone's guess. Disney shareholders should be told.

The Royal Mask of the Kah Society, crowned by six lizards, is the most pneumatically monumental mask I've ever seen: the forehead and cheeks thrust outwards androgynously, unable to decide whether they are swelling gonads or spreading thighs.

The brass and copper sculptures from Benin and Ife in Nigeria are the most celebrated artefacts of sub-Saharan Africa. When the British sacked Benin in 1897, there was disbelief that Africans were capable of such feats. Attempts were made to explain it all away — the objects must have been made by Portuguese traders, ancient Egyptians or even the lost tribes of Israel. The still current term Benin "bronzes" was a last-ditch effort to drag them into the European mainstream. They are, in fact, made of brass derived from European trinkets.

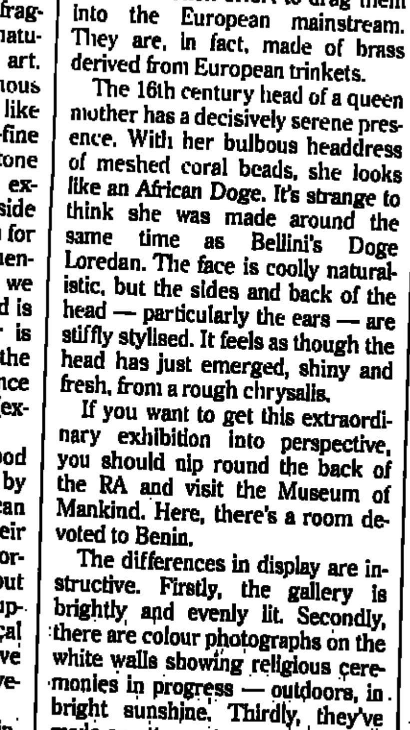
The 16th century head of a queen mother has a decisively serene presence. With her bulbous headdress of meshed coral beads, she looks like an African Doge. It's strange to think she was made around the same time as Bellini's Doge Loredan. The face is coolly naturalistic, but the sides and back of the head — particularly the ears — are stiffly stylised. It feels as though the head has just emerged, shiny and fresh, from a rough chrysalis.

If you want to get this extraordinary exhibition into perspective, you should nip round the back of the RA and visit the Museum of Mankind. Here, there's a room devoted to Benin.

The differences in display are instructive. Firstly, the gallery is brightly and evenly lit. Secondly, there are colour photographs on the white walls showing religious ceremonies in progress — outdoors, in bright sunshine. Thirdly, they've made an attempt to recreate a royal altar, showing how brass sculptures and ivory carvings might have been arranged.

It's far from perfect, but it's more illuminating than what's on offer at the RA. What we get here is an archaic form of appropriation — a Christianisation of the pagan. In the final room, we find an Islamic ewer made from rock crystal which became part of the Treasury of the Basilica of San Marco in Venice during the Middle Ages. The RA has done something similar: it has sucked all of Africa into an ambience as hushed and murky as any Gothic Cathedral.

Africa: The Art Of A Continent at the Royal Academy until January 21



Left, Leopard, from Nigeria (19th century), Right, Grave Figure, from Sudan (late 19th/early 20th century)

Madan raises the stakes

POP
Caroline Sullivan

BLUR and most other luminaries of the back-to-three-chords sensibility known as Britpop are linked not just by puppyish features but by race (white) and gender (male). Few women, and even fewer women of colour, have come to the party. That in itself makes Echobelly — whose dominant members, Sonya Madan and Debbie Smith, are Indian and West Indian respectively — unique.

The north London fivesome are equally unusual because they challenge the idea that political correctness and good pop are mutually exclusive concepts. They possess none of that Billy Braggish, oatbran quality that compels you to pay attention because it's good for you. The shiny, trash-punky Echobelly are listenable in a way that transcends politics.

Whether they can also transcend the press's "Cor, that Sonya, what a babe" angle is another thing altogether. Encouragingly, the studenty boys at the third date of a tour promoting their new album, On, were too nice to slaver openly. If they had, however, the baldish, no-nonsense Smith would have clouted them with her guitar.

Their entrance was preceded by four venetian blinds unfurling. If that was supposed to suggest intimacy, what followed was anything but. Echobelly are a big group now, with two Top 10 albums, and have adjusted their presentation accordingly. Smith and co-bald guitarist Glenn Johansson had their amplifiers turned up to arena volume, and Madan played to the gallery, regarding her supplicants with a serene smile.

She maintained her Zenlike calm through the first few numbers, including Give Her a Gun. Madan's smile, her repetition of the chorus, "Won't someone give her a gun?" and the barking boy fans made for a strange three minutes.

Otherwise, Echobelly being a pretty conventional crew, musically, strangeness was in short supply. Johansson and Smith didn't try anything tricky, though Smith looked quite Keith Richardly with a cigarette clamped between her jaws. For his part, drummer Andy Henderson was there as much to make a noise like dustbin lids on a tin roof as to keep time. The backing 'Bellies, then, are competent and enthusiastic, but to judge from this show, Madan is the only one who would pass an audition for pop-goddess school.

Her tones were as close to bell-like as possible for a human voice. Echobelly revolve around that voice. Madan was as sweet and remote as Blondie-era Deborah Harry, whose voice hers resembles.

During their paean to peculiar sex, Pantyhose and Roses, the video screen flashed up a picture of a corsetted woman with the legend "Madam is waiting". It was surely coincidence, but at that moment Madan stretched a majestic arm toward the frothing fans and looked very imperious indeed. Submissive types must have been crushed after King Of The Kerb, when she unregally towel-dried Johansson's head.

It was quite a set, if only because of Madan's charisma. Keep an eye on her.

Sick of colour foolishness

Claire Messud meets the writer Dorothy West, the last survivor of the Harlem Renaissance



Dorothy West, who first wrote to avoid fights PHOTOGRAPH: ALISON SHAW

DOROTHY WEST'S house is hard to find. Just a stone's throw from the quaint and bustling tourist port of Oak Bluffs, on the well-heeled holiday island of Martha's Vineyard, the doll-sized frame house where West has lived since 1945 is tucked away in a maze of dirt roads guaranteed to befuddle the less determined visitor. The hubbub of the day-trippers does not reach this wooded enclave and the only sound, apart from the birds and crickets, is the occasional muffled roar of a motorboat in the bay.

Of late, however, West's idyllic privacy has been interrupted by a steady stream of interviewers, photographers and fans. At the age of 88, she, the last survivor of the African-American artistic heyday of the 1930s known as the Harlem Renaissance, has been rediscovered. Her current fame is due to the publication of her second novel, The Wedding, written almost 50 years after her first. An acute but tender exploration of the dynamics of colour and class in the black aristocracy, set in Oak Bluffs itself (America's oldest black resort), the novel has enjoyed tremendous success in the United States, not least because it brings delightfully to life a milieu most Americans, regardless of colour, barely knew existed.

West herself was born into this prosperous élite in Boston in 1907. Her father, a former slave from Virginia, was a wholesale fruit and vegetable merchant known as the Black Banana King; her mother, considerably younger than her husband, was "one of the 12 beauties of Boston", an elegant and formidable matriarch with "the most beautiful complexion you ever saw — pink and gold, pink and gold!" She informed her anxious, brown-skinned daughter, on the eve of Dorothy's entrance into Boston's prestigious Girls' Latin school, that "people of proper background never made fun of other people because of conditions over which they had no control, like being 10, like being small for 10, like being coloured".

Dorothy, unfortunately, did not find all her peers to be of "proper background". Her cousins Eugenia and Helene were already at the school, but were so fair-skinned that the other children thought they were white. When they arrived with Dorothy in tow, the white children exhorted them not to "play with that nigger", an insult Helene countered with her fists. To avoid arguments, Dorothy took to slipping away alone: "I used writing as an excuse for not going out to play. That was the beginning of my writing."

By the time she was a teenager, she was a regular winner of the Boston Post's daily short story contests for amateurs, often bringing home the $10 prize at a time when "$10 could go quite a little distance". At 17, she shared second prize with Zora Neale Hurston in Opportunity magazine's national story competition. She travelled to New York, "the magical city", to collect it and found herself swept up in the vital hive of African-American creativity later dubbed the Harlem Renaissance. Ostensibly living at the YWCA with Helene, she camped out at Hurston's apartment and befriended the writers Countee Cullen, Richard Wright, Wallace Thurman and Langston Hughes, to name but a few. She flirted with the stage and travelled to London as a member of the Theater Guild. Here she rubbed shoulders with the then Prince of Wales and Mrs Simpson.

Along with Langston Hughes, she was part of a group of 25 black Americans who visited the Soviet Union to make a film about black poverty in the United States. The project was abandoned, but not before West had dined twice with Sergei Eisenstein. Wherever she went, this young, diminutive and dynamic woman found herself cosseted by her delighted colleagues: "They were extremely protective of me. If you're a virgin, people are really very kind to you — have you ever thought about that?" she asks, and then laughs. "Well, things are so different now."

Back in New York in 1934, West founded the magazine Challenge, later called New Challenge, which, until 1937, published the work of many young African-American writers. During the Depression, she worked with the WPA Writers' Project. But by 1945 she had tired of city life and returned to Martha's Vineyard, where she had summered throughout her childhood and of which she has written: "Long before I lived here year-round, in my childhood, in the years of my exuberant youth, I knew the island was the home of my heart." There, in 1948, she wrote her first novel, The Living Is Easy, which, like The Wedding, focuses on the aspirations of the black middle classes. She then settled into a prolific career as a journalist and short story writer.

'You'd better learn to laugh, little girl, there'll be plenty of tears along the line'

West never married, in part because "I thought I wouldn't be a good wife" and in part because there was simply too much else to attend to. But she received many proposals, the first when she was only 14: "My voice was very small and I remember saying: 'I think we're too young'." Years later: "I was going to meet a young man at the train station, but the child I was taking care of got sick. Things like that kept happening. It just wasn't destined to be."

West does not seem aware that her life has been remarkable, but she does acknowledge that her mother's strength was an inspiration. Mrs West taught her daughter not to see her race or sex as obstacles. "My mother was strong enough for all people. My father caught the 5am trolley every morning and didn't come home till dinner-time: the women had the house all day long."

Although an only child, West grew up surrounded by cousins — her mother was one of 22 children. "They were all light-skinned, so there was no dark-skinned person in my family to tell me it wasn't a good thing to be. As my mother used to say: 'I get so sick of colour foolishness.' I'm very aware of how some dark-skinned people are about light skin. My aunt once fell sick in the street and all the coloured people passed her by because they thought she was white."

This said, she can't resist joking about it: "I rather think that when my mother took me out, people thought she was a kindly lady taking the cook's child out for the day."

There is a mischievous glint in West's eye as she says this. She clearly learned early her mother's chief lesson: "You'd better learn to laugh, little girl, because there'll be plenty of tears along the line." Rather than raging at the injustice of racism, West has chosen, in her life and in her fiction, to celebrate colour: "We come in all colours of the rainbow, child. All colours," she says. As Shelby Coles, the protagonist of The Wedding, reflects: "Color was a false distinction; love was not."

The Wedding by Dorothy West is published by Abacus at £9.99

Appetite for decadence

Matt Seaton

Diana, The Goddess Who Hunts Alone
by Carlos Fuentes
Bloomsbury 217pp £14.99

ONE QUESTION remains, naggingly, at the end of this book: did Carlos Fuentes really have an affair with Jean Seberg in 1970?

In his dreams, perhaps; for the Diana of the title — Diana Soren — is a barely disguised understudy for Jean Seberg, the actress who as a teenager was plucked from obscurity in Marshalltown, Iowa, to play Joan of Arc in Otto Preminger's 1957 screen version of Shaw's Saint Joan, and who was immortalised two years later by Jean-Luc Godard in A Bout de Souffle. By 1970, however, her career had stalled, and her name stayed in the Hollywood gossip columns, not so much for the increasingly duff roles she took, as for the radical causes she espoused. But when the writer-narrator, who is named Carlos and bears more than a passing resemblance to the distinguished Mexican novelist, diplomat and political philosopher Fuentes, encounters Diana Soren at a 1969 New Year's Eve party in Mexico City, she seems a fantasy come true. Carlos abandons his long-suffering Mexican wife and accompanies the actress on a location-shoot for a second-rate Western.

Fuentes gives us the full lowdown on their love-making, leaving little to the lubricious imagination. But part of Diana Soren remains a fantasy, an untouchable mystery, and one of the hazards of screwing a movie-star, Carlos discovers, is having to measure yourself against the ex's. When, part-way into their affair, Diana puts a picture of Clint Eastwood by the bed, Carlos is at a loss as to how he should respond.

The affair, of course, ends badly, and Diana Soren even worse. But our hero is fearless in the face of a cliché, and hangs a mass of occasionally turgid reflections about theology, the writer's craft, the Hollywood dream factory and revolutionary politics, on this rather flimsy story of love and despair.

The saving grace of Diana is that it is also the portrait of the artist as a no-longer-young man: the writer-narrator has just turned 40 at the end of the sixties, a decade whose very decadence has allowed him to prolong the appetites and inclinations of his youth artificially.

What fascinates the reader is the merciless picture of Carlos Fuentes's double, a vain and conceited, if talented, man who is haunted by his own inauthenticity and finds his analogue in an androgynous screen goddess with a one-way ticket to oblivion. Fuentes himself, one infers, is older and wiser.

Books @ The Guardian Weekly

To order any of the books reviewed:
Phone: **(+44) 181 964 1251**
Fax: **(+44) 181 964 1254**
Email: **bid@mail.bogo.co.uk**

Payment by credit card/cheque payable to: **The Guardian Weekly Books**
Postal address: 29 Pall Mall Deposit, Barlby Road, London W10 6BL, UK.

Airmail postage costs:

	Europe	Rest of World
Hardback —	£3.95	£7.50
Paperback —	£1.95	£2.95

Belief and butchery

Laura Cumming

The Statement
Brian Moore
Bloomsbury 217pp £14.99

IN 1989, a Frenchman, Paul Touvier, was arrested at a Catholic monastery in Nice on a charge of crimes against humanity. As Intelligence Chief of the Lyons *milice* under the Vichy regime, he had been responsible for the execution of seven Jewish hostages. Dormant history erupted into the present: after 40 years in hiding, Touvier was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The Catholic Church, despite the claims against him, had given the man asylum. This reality, with its fraught criss-crossing of secular and religious laws, forms a diagram for Brian Moore's new novel, a thriller in which crises of conscience are as tense as the escalating manhunt.

Moore's criminal, Pierre Brossard, is viewed by two of his hunters as an old man in a darned cardigan, partial to a daily *tarte aux amandes*. Both men have been hired to assassinate him on behalf of the "Committee for Justice for the Jewish Victims of Dombey", as declared in statements they expect to pin on his corpse, but which end up attached to their own. Alerted by the murders to the existence of another organisation in pursuit of Brossard, Colonel Roux of the *gendarmerie* perceives a way of pressuring the Church to assist with the case. If it continues to harbour Brossard, he reasons, it may be responsible for his assassination.

If there isn't a Vatican committee for the study of Moore's work, one ought to be formed. Not only is he extremely prescient to the political dilemmas confronting Rome — the Church's relationship with the Polish trades union movement, for example, in his mid-eighties novel The Colour Of Blood; its ambivalence to Father Aristide before Haiti's military coup in No Other Life — but he sieves the moral issues of faith to an exacting refinement.

Moore's account of the growing clerical turmoil is meticulously nuanced: from the agonised Monsignor who offers him absolution but not succour, to the reactionary prelates who briefly protect him as an assertion of the Church's autonomy. The right wing also shades into the airy world beyond the cloisters, as the hunt for Brossard passes among rural communities where Le Pen is hailed and Maastricht hated as a German conspiracy. Eventually, Brossard finds welcome with a prior who countenances him as part of Pétain's struggle against a "leftist, Godless France." By now, material accommodation is all Brossard cares about — "With food like this, fasting was not a penance".

That terse aside amounts to characterisation in a narrative as stylistically spartan as this. Brian Moore has eliminated even the slightest linguistic flourish that might draw attention to his short, clear sentences. Even conversation is cut to the knuckle — a swift exchange of information over a coffee, a three-second phone call. Brossard's past is encapsulated in a dreadful, guilty nightmare about executed Jews; his racism conveyed in a single plea for exile in a land without "*beurs* [North African immigrants] or *noirs*". The authorial voice remains fastidiously neutral, except for one indulgent breach. A dog — surely becoming Moore's wry trademark — barks at Brossard's every approach.

As a thriller, The Statement has a tightly-controlled pace. There are false denouements and cunningly concealed clues, and characters are highlighted never to appear again.

Moore unseats the rather conventional conclusion of his plot with something much more strange and disturbing. Surrounded on all sides, Brossard resorts to prayer. Belief is always at issue in Moore's fiction, and since you could never accuse him of playing God, you must interpret the scene by yourself. But it contains a revelation so mysterious that it resonates far beyond the pages of this book.

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

Collected Poems 1947-1985, by Allen Ginsberg (Penguin, £17.00)

A CLOWN, or perhaps the jester that Bob Dylan used to keep referring to; 900 pages or so of his poetical tomfoolery, which looks more coherent and impressive when collected in a single volume. Apparently, like Shakespeare, he never blotted a line, although at times you might wish he had; like it or not, his is an authentic, important American voice.

The Anatomy Lesson, by Philip Roth (Vintage, £5.99)

THIS, from 1983, is one of Roth's best novels, about Nathan Zuckerman, blocked novelist, driven nearly mad by an undiagnosable and literal pain in the neck. One of the funniest novels about writing ever, a shade away from being an anguished and scabrous assault on himself. It also has one of the great opening sentences: "When he is sick, every man wants his mother; if she's not around, other women must do."

The Uncollected Oscar Wilde, ed John Wyse Jackson (4th Estate, £6.99)

A WORK of modest but useful scholarship, collecting various bits and bobs from Wilde's occasional writings, lectures, and reviews from his days as editor of The Woman's World. An acute, but by no means unnecessarily cruel critic, spotting the young Yeats ("It is impossible to doubt . . . that he will some day give us work of high import"), effortlessly mixing dandyism, aesthetic seriousness, and the lightness of tone such pieces demand.

Well Sorted, ed the London Arts Board (Serpent's Tail, £8.99)

THE BEST entries for the London Short Story Competition 1995, as judged by Esther Freud, Blake Morrison and Marina Warner. Typical themes are the A-Z, future dystopias, unusual narrators (cats, ghosts, viruses); stories by Francis King and Iain Sinclair to entice the cautious. What little weak stuff there is strengthened by the shared obsession with the capital.

History: the Home Movie, by Craig Raine (Penguin, £6.99)

THE century seen through the eyes of his ancestors, told in Raine's typical three-line stanzas. It's a convincing and sustained achievement, a triumph of tone and manner. Raine's poetry is, of course, famous for its similes, metaphors and images, and History won't let you down: cats' balls like garlic bulbs, a fly's "acrid asterisk"; distracting sometimes, but all helping to illuminate this vertical slice through time. Like home movies, poignant, intimate, and stochastic; also sometimes murder to sit through.

Smitten by Kahlomania

Eve MacSweeney

The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait
Introduction by Carlos Fuentes
Bloomsbury 295pp £25

FRIDA KAHLO was a great interior decorator, as anyone who has visited her former house in Coyoacán knows. She was also a great character, and lived a life filled with such spirit and pathos that no one who knows its story, as told in her intense, autobiographical paintings, can fail to be moved by it. Was she a great painter? The force of her personality, and of the legend it inspired, makes objectivity hard to muster. Those art critics unafflicted with the Frida bug judge her a standard surrealist, though she never accepted this designation.

Why is Kahlo so phenomenally popular? She's a great story, certainly: with her passionate love affair with Diego Rivera, her philandering, twice-times husband, as well as an affair with Trotsky and numerous others with both men and women; with her lurid history of illness, accident and operations, her gangrenous foot, amputated leg and tragically early death.

At a time when the cultivation of image was taken less for granted than it is now, Kahlo contrived a personal style that was vivid and theatrical. She dressed in highly-adorned native costume, wore plaits and head-dresses and applied kohl to exaggerate her thick, joined eyebrows.

Kahlo's appropriation of naive forms — folk art, popular illustration, *ex votos* — and her use of visual metaphors and personal references make her art narrative and easy to understand. As a persona and an artist, Kahlo is clear: we can have her and claim her as our own.

And many have done, not least Madonna and Michelle Pfeiffer, who are said to have vied for the right to play Kahlo on film. A huge industry has grown up around the themes and props of her life, the latest of whose products, The Diary Of Frida Kahlo, is a perfect example of the mix of empathy, exploitation and glibness which characterises the Kahlo cult.

Moon, Sun, Me: Fridaphiles find even her doodles obligatory reading

Titillatingly flagged as "an intimate self-portrait" that was never intended for publication, it is a testament to the obsessive regard in which she is held that Kahlo's doodles and handwritten streams of consciousness, pretty though they are, should be lovingly reproduced in a lavish edition such as this. Quite what one is meant to do with 167 pages of multicoloured Spanish script and decoration — other than stroke them — is not clear. Carlos Fuentes's flowery introduction, in which he pumps up Kahlo's mythology by likening her, with her wounds, to schism-torn Mexico itself, is scarcely readable. The essay that follows by Sarah Lowe rather grotesquely invites us to witness "in words and pictures . . . her inexorable path towards death". Smitten Fridaphiles could, of course, study Lowe's translations and commentary at the back of the book, learn the meaning of the words and retrace them as if they were Kahlo herself — indeed Lowe recommends reading from the diary aloud. But for the main part, the effect of this would be rather like reciting rock lyrics from an album cover (as many of us have done in our time).

To read the diary, Lowe promises in her bossy notes, "is to be drawn into Kahlo's sphere". But if Kahlo's paintings are lucid, these diaries, written non-sequentially during the final years of her life, during which she was often doped on painkillers, are rarely so. Some sensual, poetic lines about Rivera, to whom she pays insistent devotion in these pages, stand out — "My body is filled with you for days and days," she writes. "you are the mirror of the night. the violent flash of the lightning. the dampness of the earth. the hollow of your armpits is my shelter. my fingertips touch your blood." There are a few autobiographical passages, an elegy to a friend, a recipe for a paint medium, but these are the exceptions in what are essentially verbal doodles.

The drawings are similarly spontaneous often built around the shape of inkblots on the page. Here again Lowe is fiercely overbearing in her analyses; how else could this edition be justified? In one, a big and little blot are turned into the sole of a foot and a bird which Kahlo sets in a polar landscape. "Visual references to feet, specifically Kahlo's right foot, are frequent throughout the diary; it is the one she suffered from most. The arctic scene suggests both the pain of cold and a remoteness toward her difficult foot," Lowe informs us gravely.

The problem with an art based so squarely on self-scrutiny and its implicit quest to master destiny is that the legacy Kahlo leaves is an overdetermined one. She — and her interpreters — make it so easy for us to identify with her that there is no room left to think between viewer and artist and our reactions easily become knee-jerk. The publishers of Frida Kahlo's diary are perfectly wise to this. Scholars might make something of it; for readers it's more fetish object than book.

Over-indulging a sweet tooth

Natasha Walter

The Chase
by Louisa May Alcott
Century 242pp £12.99

Louisa May Alcott
Unmasked: Collected Thrillers
edited by Madeleine Stern
Northeastern University Press
754pp £23.50

FOR MANY readers the idea of a newly discovered, previously unpublished novel by Louisa May Alcott will look rather like discovering another layer of chocolates in an apparently finished box. But The Chase was previously unpublished for good reason. It was written in 1866, two years before Alcott embarked on Little Women, when she was scraping a living by writing gothic tales for trashy magazines. The Chase is in the style of those tales, so much so that it was turned down by her publishers for being "too sensational". This is about as distant from Alcott's best creation, the wholesome March family, as it is possible to get.

Graceful, girlish Rosamond Vivien elopes by boat with Philip Tempest, a sinister stranger. She runs away from him after discovering he is already married and he chases her across Europe, in and out of convents and castles, through masked balls and scented grottos, leaving a trail of disguises, fake suicides, abductions, imprisonments, daggers at night and duels at daybreak. Every moment of the tale is gloriously implausible. Far from the down-to-earth March household, there are no stained gloves or burnt ringlets to disrupt these swishing get-ups, not an instant of embarrassment or deliberate humour, only cold thrills and tender partings, shivers of detestation and hours of retribution.

But from time to time, the voice of the Alcott we know breaks through, about as appropriate to this subject matter as her dumpy mother-figure, Marmee, would be in the Hammer House of Horrors. When Rosamond first notices Tempest's obligatory scar, she is coolly unimpressed: "Duels are not heroic". Sometimes Tempest forgets his flowery nonsense and "gave her an approving nod which pleased her more than the most graceful compliment". Before Rose elopes, she confides in Tempest that what she really wants is to earn her living; he tells her plainly that her choices are teaching, working as a companion, or marriage — the same limited choices that the March sisters knock up against as they, like Rose, looked "to earn my bread in peace and freedom".

AND WHEN Tempest laughingly asks her what she would do if she discovered an unforgivable fault in him, the conversation snaps into realism: "'What would you do then?' 'Go away and —' He interrupted with a triumphant laugh, 'Die as heroines always do, tender slaves as they are.' 'No, live and forget you,' was the unexpected reply." Such moments of terse ordinariness sit oddly with the candyfloss passion that puffs out the rest of the book. There is a streak of Jo March in Rosamond Vivien. And that streak is displayed for good when we realise that Rosamond and Tempest will never be reunited; the perfect, sinister hero and the perfect, girlish heroine are no more meant for each other than Jo and Laurie were, and Rose refuses the merely glamorous option, as Jo did.

This streak of blunt realism isn't enough to save the book from itself. Most readers will find themselves muttering, as Mr March did over Jo March's first attempts at sensational fiction: "You can do better than this, my girl." But a dip into Louisa May Alcott Unmasked, a collection of her magazine stories, plumbs depths to which even The Chase does not descend. There are some memorably surreal moments in this volume, distilled from Alcott's strange mixture of feminism and sensationalism, domesticity and passion, but most of them are, as she concisely put it, "rubbishy". Still, it is wonderful to find that the same writer who can epitomise Victorian morality once wrote a tale about some frolicking, druggy lovers whose last line is: "Heaven bless hashish, if its dreams end like this!"

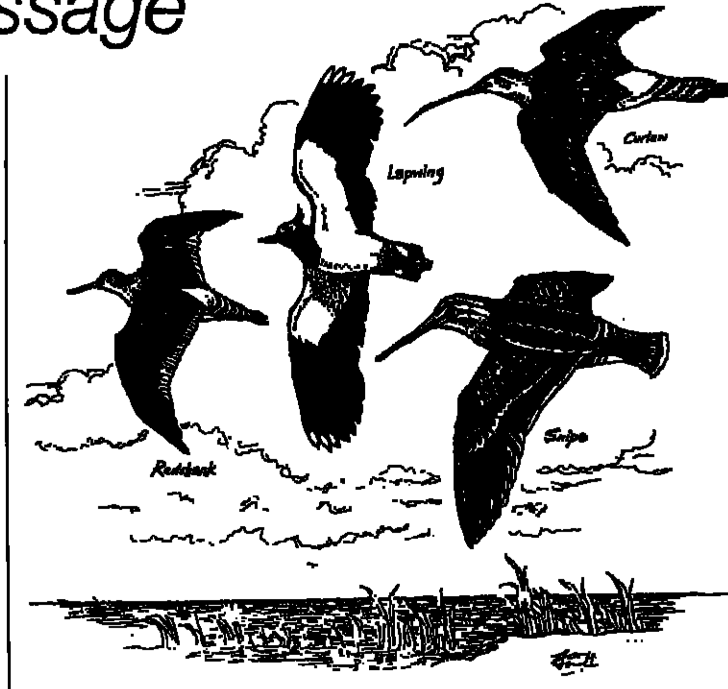
GUARDIAN WEEKLY
October 22 1995

Unsafe passage

Colin Luckhurst

IF I WERE a bird of passage on a migratory route across Western Europe hallowed by historic usage I would, I believe, heave a heartfelt sigh of relief on reaching British shores.

This would apply whether I was a migrant coming south from the Arctic to spend winter in milder conditions, or an African swallow coming north to nest in a cooler summer climate. Down there, I would think, there is a land of such refined susceptibilities that there is a legal framework of protection for me and my kind. They even have a Royal Society for the Protection of Birds! How very different from some of the parts of Europe over which I have recently flown on my migratory trail.



In Italy and France, at various stages of the year, significant parts of the population come out with shotguns to blast away at any passing avian life. Elsewhere, mist nets and limed twigs account for many of my kinfolk. Lark's tongue paté needs a lot of larks.

But the attempt, above, to put myself into the tiny cranial cavity of a migrant species of bird, and there are many, would in fact ignore a range of other factors which influence the survival of the natural world. Continental western Europe may not be as enlightened as the United Kingdom with its raft of legislative protection for wild birds, but it is, in many areas, less densely populated than Britain and the survival of wild and wetland habitats is just as important, for some species more important, than the legislative protection (hard in any case to enforce) of nests and eggs.

I was prompted to these thoughts by the recent publication of Breeding Waders In The Severn Vale In 1995, a report commissioned by the RSPB and undertaken by John Quinn from the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust. John Quinn, an amiable young Irishman from County Waterford, took me through his findings as we sat in the observation windows of the lounge at Slimbridge, the headquarters of the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust where he is a contract research worker.

A FLIGHT of feral Canada geese flew over in noisy formation as we discussed his work. His focus is the four wading species — snipe, redshank, curlew and lapwing and their continued appearance in a defined stretch of the Severn Vale. It does not add up to good news. Although the four waders are still to be found, their numbers, in comparison with an earlier count undertaken in the 1980s, indicate further decline.

Decline may have been continuous, at a varying pace, for as long back as the start of land drainage two centuries ago. Habitat change, both through improved control of flood water by the National Rivers Authority and its predecessors, and through improved farming methods, is clearly responsible. There is less wet grassland, and improved grassland, lusher and richer, does not provide the tussocky surface or the bare land on which, for example, the snipe and the lapwing respectively like to nest. Small mixed farms provide a richer habitat for waders than do larger intensive farms with autumn sown cereal crops. Set-aside land does little for wader habitat. So the natural world is yet again pushed back by the activities of human bipeds — now in plague proportions in some parts.

The threat to the habitat of the curlew I particularly regret — that lovely long liquid bubbling song is, arguably, the most attractive of British bird song and I have, when in curlew territory in Scotland and Cornwall, been able to whistle an imitation good enough to get the birds to call back, at least until they sussed the con.

Chess Leonard Barden

NOW THAT chess has two simultaneous world championships, it's rare to find a top 10 grandmaster who has failed to qualify as either a Fide or a PCA title candidate. This unfortunate élite is led by a player whom contemporaries recognise as one of the most gifted and original talents on the international circuit.

Alexey Shirov, an ethnic Russian representing Latvia, came to prominence as a teenager with some dazzling brilliancies which recalled the early games of the two greatest Baltic players, Keres and Tal. Shirov wanted to be his own man and positively bristled when anyone compared him to the great names. He looked sure to be a title contender in the current cycles until he unexpectedly failed to qualify from either interzonal in 1991.

Shirov has blamed his setbacks on the upheavals of a cosmopolitan lifestyle. Married to an Argentinian and trying for Spanish citizenship, he was writing a book of his best games, entitled Fire On The Board. Then his laptop, containing most of his work and including his back-up copy, was stolen at Orly airport.

It's not surprising that his performances in 1994-95 have been erratic, with high tournament finishes alongside bottom places. His latest result, second at Biel, suggests that stability is returning to his lifestyle and play; and as this week's example shows, he still has the hungriest tactical game of all top GMs.

Alexey Shirov-Vadim Zvjaginsev, Biel 1995

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 Nc3 Qc7 6 Be2 Nf6 7 Be3 b6?! An early psychological ploy, encouraging White's gambit reply. Black's normal reponse here is 7 . . . a6, preparing b5 and the usual Sicilian Defence Q-side advance.

8 g4 Splat! Either 8 0-0 or 8 0-0-0 is usual, when Black's b6 might later prove a time loss; but Shirov looks for a direct refutation.

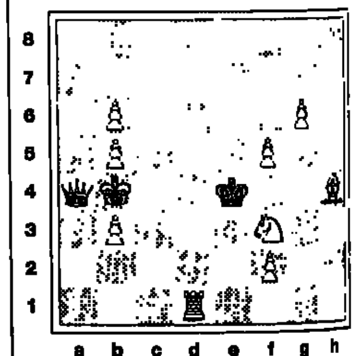
h6 9 Qd2?! Simply 9 f3 guards the e4 pawn. **Nxd4 10 Bxd4 e5 11 Nb5** 11 Be3 Bb4 would be fine for Black. **Qb8 12 Be3 Nxe4 13 Qd3 a6?!** Black expects too much from opening up the a file for his rook. Instead Nc5 puts the onus on White to show enough for his sacrificed pawn.

14 Bf3 axb5 15 Bxe4 Ra4 16 Bd5 Avoiding the trap 16 b3? Rxe4 17 Qxe4 Bb7. **Bc5 17 0-0-0 0-0** Black cannot allow Bb7? 18 Bb3 and Qxd7+. **18 g5!** From here on, Shirov displays his attacking mastery. **hxg5 19 Rhg1 g4 20 b3!** Looks dangerous, but Black's lone rook lacks support.

Rxa2 21 Rxg4 Qd6 Black is forced on the defensive, for Ra1+ 22 Kb2 Rxd1 loses to 23 Qg6! **22 Kb1! Ra6 23 Rdg1 Qf6 24 Bg5** Five white pieces are joined in attacking harmony. **Qxf2 25 Bh6 e4 26 Rxg7+ Kh8 27 Qh3 Resigns.** The winning threat is 28 Rg8+ Rxg8 29 Bg7 mate.

● The UK national league starts its third season on November 25, with matches at Eagle Star Insurance's HQ at Cheltenham. First round pairings are Croydon v Northwest, Witney v Bristol, South Wales v British Chess Magazine, Richmond v Na Fianna, Wood Green v Guildford, Hertford v Midlands (holders).

No 2392



White mates in three moves, against any defence (by V Kopaev). Hunt the lone king.

No 2391: 1 Re6 Bxd5 2 Rxd6 Bxc4 3 Rxd8+ Rxd8 4 Qh4! Resigns. White wins easily on material.

Quick crossword no. 284

Across

1 Female singing voice (5-7)
9 Iron — journalists (5)
10 Continue despite opposition (7)
11 Close (4)
12 Reply, reaction (8)
14 Situated below (6)
15 Fleet of ships (6)
18 Manual work building (8)
20 Break — a thin biscuit (4)
22 Shining (7)
23 Besiege (5)
24 Meteor (8,4)

Down

2 Graceful (7)
3 Enthusiasm — fruit rind (4)
4 Late night meal (6)
5 Sweat (8)
6 Foreigner (5)
7 In mood for battle (2,3,7)
8 Start of speech (7,5)
13 European songbird (8)
16 Loss of memory (7)
17 Decomposing — nasty! (6)
19 Sound broadcasting (5)
21 Wading bird (4)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

THIS WEEK'S column contains two questions for you. First, a defensive problem — take the West cards and try to defeat South's slam contract:

North (dummy)
♠ 7 6 5 4
♥ K J 8 5
♦ K 7 5
♣ A 5

West (you)
♠ A 3 2
♥ 4 3 2
♦ Q J 10
♣ K 8 4 3

The bidding has been:

South	West	North	East
1♠	No	4♠	No
4NT	No	5♦	No
6♠	No		No

Your lead of the queen of diamonds is won by South's ace. South leads the queen of clubs. How do you defend?

You have one sure trick in the ace of trumps. You may make another in clubs, or diamonds, or hearts — but the wrong play on this trick could be fatal. At the table, West knew all about covering an honour with an honour, but he also knew that such "rules", if followed blindly, can lead to disaster. If South's hand were, for example:

♠KQJ109 ♥A7 ♦A63 ♣QJ10

then South would have to lose a spade trick and a diamond — as long as West refrained from covering the queen of clubs. If he did cover, though, South would discard dummy's losing diamond on the third round of clubs and concede only the ace of spades.

West played low on the queen of clubs. Alas, the full hand was as shown (see top right table), and the "impossible" slam succeeded. South had played very cleverly in leading the queen of clubs at the second trick, before West knew much about the distribution. If you're going to try a swindle at bridge, you have a much greater chance of success if you try it early rather than late in the play.

Your second question is this: What has the declarer's play on this deal to do with an important event in the bridge world that begins this month? The answer is that the World Championships have begun in Beijing, and South's play is called in bridge jargon a "Chinese finesse".

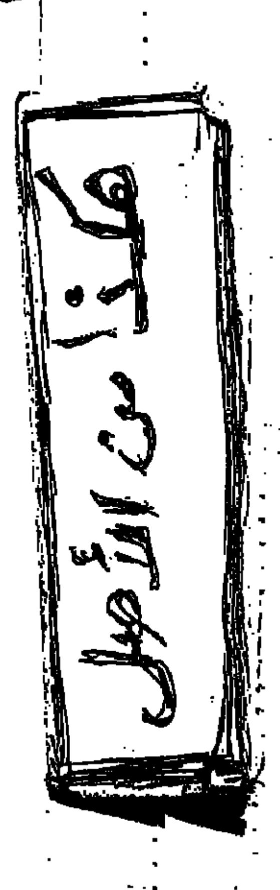
North
♠ 7 6 5 4
♥ K J 8 5
♦ K 7 5
♣ A 5

West
♠ A 3 2
♥ 4 3 2
♦ Q J 10
♣ K 8 4 3

East
♠ None
♥ Q 10 9 6
♦ 9 8 6 4 3 2
♣ J 10 9

South
♠ K Q J 10 9 8
♥ A 7
♦ A
♣ Q 7 6 2

Britain is represented in the Ladies' series in China by Liz McGowan and Sandra Penfold, Sandra Landy and Abbey Walker, and Heather Dhondy and Sally Anoyrkatis. The first three have plenty of experience at international level, but Abbey, Heather and Sally are young players making their debuts on the world stage. I'm sure you'll join me in wishing them good fortune.



Rugby League World Cup Wales 22 Western Samoa 10

Quinnell sets up dream semi-final

Paul Fitzpatrick at Swansea

VETCH FIELD was brimming with a capacity crowd of 15,385 on Sunday and hundreds of unlucky spectators were locked out. There should be another full house at Old Trafford on Saturday when Wales meet England in the first semi-final.

In defeating Western Samoa, Wales produced their most mature performance since they were resurrected in 1991. They restricted talented, if sometimes careless and ill-disciplined, opponents to a single try in the first half and then in the second half completed the great shut-out. Western Samoa, who tired towards the end, scarcely got a look-in after the interval.

The Welsh pack to a man were outstanding, with Scott Quinnell especially impressive. The Wigan forward has not played since early September but he played for the full 80 minutes and gave everything. He was a worthy Man of the Match.

It was a memorable night, too, for Jonathan Davies, playing his last game of international rugby league in his homeland. He had an influential say in affairs but here was proof yet again that Wales are no one-man team.

Iestyn Harris was again near faultless at full-back, scoring the first try and scarcely putting a foot wrong. The Welsh have taken him to their hearts and the 19-year-old back must have pushed Quinnell hard for the individual match award.

The Wales captain Davies was not surprisingly emotional afterwards. "I am retiring from international football after this competition," he said. "And there could be nothing better than a meeting against the English in the semi-final. Obviously we are going to be the underdogs. But I'm sure we will see a serious game of rugby."

It was at times a highly physical battle but the referee Russell Smith kept good control and the worst punishments he handed out were two sin-binnings to Ropati early on and to Maea in the second half.

Wales's first two tries both came from scrums, the first conceded by Western Samoa when Laumatia allowed himself to be hauled into touch on the first tackle. Ellis fed the linking Harris and, with that characteristic shake of the hips, the young full-back was away to the posts.

Fa'ausu Afoa of Western Samoa brushes Jonathan Davies aside, but there was no holding Wales PHOTOGRAPH: TONY MARSHALL

Panapa then made an opening for Matautia to slip the leash beautifully and he raced clear down the middle.

Davies's kicking had been less accurate than usual but, after another scrum, he pin-pointed Sullivan with a kick down the right wing. Sullivan showed Laumatia a clean pair of heels and, although the ball almost eluded him at the last, the winger got a clean touchdown.

Schuster, with a kick from just inside the Welsh half, brought the score to 12-8 and, after Davies had landed a penalty, Western Samoa's captain kicked two points in first-half injury-time.

Wales controlled the game admirably after the interval. They were grateful to take whatever was on offer and a Davies drop goal was greeted ecstatically by the crowd.

Maea was dispatched to the sin-bin for a high tackle which cut down Bateman in full flight. Davies landed the penalty and at 17-10 the Welsh were edging out of reach.

Harris then dropped a goal and in the last minute the spectators were sent into near delirium when Ellis, fed by Phillips, managed to find a gap on the left and score in the corner. Wales were home.

● England have also ensured their place in the semi-finals. After earlier victories over Australia and Fiji, they made light work of South Africa on Saturday, winning 46-0 at Headingley. England's tries came from Pinkney (2), Haughton, Goulding, Sampson, Broadbent, Radlinski and Smith, with Goulding kicking seven goals.

The story so far

FIRST ROUND

Group One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	3	3	0	0	112	16	6
Australia	3	2	0	1	168	26	4
Fiji	3	1	0	2	52	118	2
South Africa	3	0	0	3	12	184	0

Results: England 20, Australia 16; Fiji 52, South Africa 6; Australia 86, South Africa 6; England 46, Fiji 0, Australia 66, Fiji 0; England 46, South Africa 0.

Group Two

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
New Zealand	2	2	0	0	47	30	4
Tonga	2	0	1	1	52	53	1
Papua NG	2	0	1	1	34	50	1

Results: New Zealand 25, Tonga 24; Papua NG 28, Tonga 28, New Zealand 22, Papua NG 6.

Group Three

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wales	2	2	0	0	50	16	4
W Samoa	2	1	1	0	66	32	2
France	2	0	0	2	16	84	0

Results: Wales 28, France 6; France 10, W Samoa 56; Wales 22, W Samoa 10.

SEMI-FINALS
Saturday October 21
England v Wales (Old Trafford, 3.0)
Sunday October 22
New Zealand v Australia (Huddersfield, 3.0).

FINAL
Saturday October 28
(Wembley, 3.0).

Australia 66 Fiji 0

Fijians here to stay despite rout

NOT all the Fijians will be going home after the end of their World Cup adventure. The back-row forward Samuela Marayawa has signed for Keighley, who are also hoping to recruit two more from the squad, *writes Paul Fitzpatrick.*

Waisale Sovatabua, the Fiji full-back, has been linked with Sheffield Eagles and, if these players (subject to work permits) do come into the English game, it should help the development of a side who made a good impression on the tournament but suddenly found life too much at Huddersfield on Saturday.

Australia, after running up 86 points against South Africa at Gateshead, produced another flood, but these Kangaroos have yet to generate that sense of imperiousness associated with their predecessors since 1982.

Fiji's Australian coach Graham Murray still feels that England are the best bet to win the cup. He was in a good position to judge after his side had met England and Australia within three days, though he might have been less certain had he been at Headingley on Saturday.

Although Australia, helped early on by a couple of atrocious refereeing decisions, were never stretched, a number of positive things emerged for their coach Bobby Fulton. Both wingers, Brett Dallas and Robbie O'Davis, scored three tries and, although the Fijians' wide defence was weak, one of this pair could now deprive John Hopoate of a place in the semi-final against New Zealand.

There was an impressive first appearance for Gary Larsen, the replacement for the injured Paul Harragon, in the second row. Larsen must have been running round with a fuzzy head after a long plane journey but he seemed to have his sights set on a semi-final place.

Andrew Johns, who equalled the international record of 30 points playing scrum-half against South Africa, landed another nine goals from 12 attempts, this time as a hooker, where he may stay.

Australia, who led 32-0 at half-time, scored 12 tries all told with Menzies (2), Hill (2), Brasher and Larsen completing the total.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Prison for butting

DUNCAN FERGUSON first made history when he became Britain's most expensive footballer. Last week he notched up another record by becoming the first professional player to be sent to jail for attacking an opponent on the pitch.

The Everton and Scotland striker was adjusting to life in a Glasgow prison after losing an appeal against a three-month sentence for head-butting John McStay, a Raith Rovers defender.

The 6ft 4in 23-year-old tossed his head in disbelief as he was led out of Edinburgh's Appeal Court. With good behaviour Ferguson, who fetched £8.3 million in transfer fees and won five international caps, could be available for Everton's home game with Sheffield Wednesday on November 25.

The Stirling-born player has also had a 12-match ban slapped on him by Scotland. An appeal against this suspension is yet to be heard.

TWO goals by John Aldridge against Latvia in Dublin rescued the Republic of Ireland from the brink of European Championship oblivion and kept alive Jack Charlton's dream of leading out his side on English soil next summer. Ireland won 2-1 and Charlton said: "If we'd lost, I probably would have quit." His future has been the subject of intense speculation following the Republic's loss of form since the summer.

Northern Ireland kept alive their faint hopes of qualifying for Euro '96 with a 4-0 victory over Liechtenstein. Wales went down 1-2 to Germany in Cardiff. In the two friendly internationals, Scotland were beaten 2-0 by Sweden in Stockholm and England drew 0-0 with Norway in Oslo.

THREE players taking part in Rugby League's World Cup were thrown out of the competition after testing positive for drugs. South Africa's Pierre Grobbelaar, the New Zealand hooker Syd Eru and France's forward Stephane Millet showed traces of three different drugs. Any further action against them will now be left to their respective associations.

Besides rugby, four other sports were hit by drug abuse. Sean McCarthy, a 22-year-old apprentice, became the first British jockey to fail a dope test. German hockey international Oliver Kurtz was named as a drug user and from Scotland came the news that Barry Lavety, the St Mirren striker, had failed a test "for a social drug".

And Liza de Villiers, the 14-year-old South African who was banned for four years after she became the youngest athlete to fail a drugs test earlier this year, tested positive again for nandrolone.

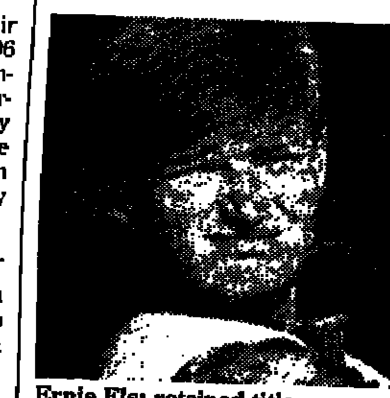
ENGLAND cricketer Devon Malcolm accepted substantial undisclosed libel damages on Monday over an article in the July issue of Wisden Cricket Monthly. It named the West Indian-born fast bowler, who is due to leave for a tour of South Africa, in such a way as to question his suitability to be selected for England, his patriotism and his loyalty.

Afterwards Malcolm said he intended to pay a share of the damages to the Derbyshire Children's hospital and the Devon Malcolm Cricket Centre in Sheffield.

TOP seed Michael Chang of the United States won the Seiko Super Tennis Tournament in Tokyo by disposing of unseeded Australian Mark Philippoussis 6-3, 6-4 in the final. "This has definitely been a career goal for me to win here," said Chang, who lost in the final last year to Croat Goran Ivanisevic.

NATIONAL Hunt jockey Declan Murphy was in a galloping form when he staged a comeback after being within a photo-finish of losing his life in May last year. His skull was fractured in eight places and a blood clot threatened to haemorrhage fatally at any second. He underwent emergency surgery and was in a coma for nearly a week. Last week, the 28-year-old Irishman put all that behind him to win Chepstow's Flat versus Jump Jockeys challenge.

SOUTH AFRICAN golfer Ernie Els retained the Toyota World Match Play Championship when he beat Australia's Steve Elkington two and one at Wentworth. Els, 26 this week, gave himself the perfect birthday present with a second




Ernie Els: retained title

crown and a cheque for £170,000. It was an uninspiring final and Els said: "My game was not quite there and I think Steve felt the same way. Neither of us brought our 'A' games. We couldn't produce the shots we wanted."

CHRIS EUBANK, former middleweight and super-middleweight champion of the world, is to quit boxing. His announcement came just hours after the death of boxer James Murray in a Glasgow hospital, although Eubank insisted that he had made the decision before the tragedy. Eubank, who has often called boxing "a brutal business", was the opponent four years ago when Michael Watson came close to death and was left with debilitating brain damage.

ADDING a Y to players' names is a widely accepted endearment by football managers. There's Giggsy, Rushy, Hughesy. However, Bobby Gould, the manager of Wales, has run into a bit of a problem with one of his players. Barry Horne has expressed the desire not to be addressed as Horney.